Police Groups Support Bill to End Federal Cannabis Prohibition and Allow Interstate Commerce

Two major law enforcement organizations have endorsed a bipartisan bill aimed at ending federal marijuana enforcement in states where it is legal. The Peace Officers Research Association of California (PORAC) and the Oregon Coalition of Police and Sheriffs (ORCOPS) are backing the Strengthening the Tenth Amendment Through Entrusting States (STATES) 2.0 Act. The Coalition for Cannabis Policy, Education, and Regulation (CPEAR), which includes members from large tobacco and alcohol companies, announced these endorsements.

Endorsements from Key Law Enforcement Groups

PORAC and ORCOPS have officially endorsed the STATES 2.0 Act, marking a significant step in the push for cannabis reform. The endorsement from these prominent law enforcement organizations highlights the growing recognition of the need for a cohesive policy that aligns state and federal regulations.

The Role of CPEAR

CPEAR announced the endorsements, emphasizing the importance of the STATES 2.0 Act in promoting effective law enforcement practices. The group's support underscores the necessity of addressing the inconsistencies between state and federal cannabis laws.

Legislative Support and Rationale

Rep. Dave Joyce (R-OH), the prime sponsor of the STATES 2.0 Act, expressed gratitude towards the law enforcement associations for their support. Joyce, a former prosecutor, highlighted the strain placed on law enforcement officers who must navigate the conflicting state and federal cannabis policies. He stressed that the STATES 2.0 Act would resolve this discrepancy, allowing officers to focus on public safety more effectively.

Other Sponsors of the Bill

The bill is also sponsored by Reps. Lori Chavez-DeRemer (R-OR), Brian Mast (R-FL), Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), and Troy Carter (D-LA). It aims to amend the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) to decriminalize federal offenses for those complying with state cannabis programs, including those operated by Indian tribes. The bill also proposes authorizing interstate marijuana commerce and imposing a federal tax on cannabis sales to support regulation and enforcement.

PORAC's Position

Brian Marvel, president of PORAC, praised the STATES 2.0 Act for balancing state autonomy with federal oversight. He noted that the bill would help law enforcement focus on reducing illegal cannabis markets and allow underfunded and understaffed agencies to prioritize more serious crimes.

ORCOPS' Perspective

Aaron Schmautz, president of ORCOPS, emphasized the importance of federal cooperation with state policies. He highlighted the necessity of addressing the disconnect between federal cannabis laws and state-level legalization efforts. Schmautz believes the STATES 2.0 Act will enhance public safety and advance responsible cannabis policies nationwide.

Impact on IRS Code Section 280E

The STATES 2.0 Act includes provisions to exempt revenue from marijuana sales in regulated state markets from Section 280E of the IRS code. This section currently prevents cannabis businesses from claiming federal tax deductions available to other traditional industries.

Timeline for Implementation

The bill mandates that the attorney general finalize a rule amending the CSA to exempt states and tribes from federal marijuana prohibition within 180 days of enactment.

Comments from Former Rep. Greg Walden

Former Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR), co-chair of CPEAR, highlighted the need for state-level input in cannabis regulation. He pointed out the conflicts arising from differing state and federal policies, which create confusion and inefficiencies for law enforcement, businesses, and the public. Walden believes the STATES 2.0 Act respects voter intentions and provides a balanced national framework.

National Polling and Public Opinion

CPEAR commissioned a poll released in March showing strong voter support for congressional legislation protecting states' rights to set their own marijuana laws. This includes over 60 percent of Republicans, indicating broad bipartisan backing for the STATES 2.0 Act.

Statements from Andrew Freedman

Andrew Freedman, executive director of CPEAR, noted that the STATES 2.0 Act aligns federal policy with state regulations, prioritizing law enforcement considerations. He called for Congress to pass legislation that protects public safety, youth, and communities while allowing states to determine their cannabis laws.

The endorsement of the STATES 2.0 Act by major law enforcement organizations like PORAC and ORCOPS represents a significant shift in the cannabis policy landscape. This bipartisan bill aims to resolve the conflicts between state and federal cannabis laws, support law enforcement efforts, and promote public safety. With broad support from various stakeholders, the STATES 2.0 Act has the potential to bring about meaningful reform in the cannabis industry.