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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NORML is pleased to announce the release of our 2020 Gubernatorial Scorecard. This extensive database assigns a letter grade 'A' through 'F' to states' governors based upon their comments and records in 2019 specific to matters of marijuana policy.

Public opinion in support of marijuana law reform, including adult-use legalization, is at an all-time high. Nonetheless, few federal lawmakers are espousing views on cannabis policy that comport with those of the majority of their constituents. As a result, most legislative activity specific to marijuana policy takes place at the state level. America's governors are our nation's most powerful state-elected officials and they often play a key role in this ongoing debate. Here is where each of them stands on issues surrounding cannabis policy.

- Thirty-two US governors received a passing grade of 'C' or higher (22 Democrats, 10 Republicans); last year, only 27 Governors received a grade of ‘C’ or higher.
- Nine US governors -- all Democrats -- received an 'A' grade
- Twelve governors received a 'B' grade (11 Democrats, 1 Republican)
- Eleven governors received a 'C' grade (9 Republicans, 2 Democrats)
- Ten governors -- 8 Republicans, 2 Democrats -- received a 'D' grade
- Eight governors -- all Republicans -- received an 'F' grade
Among Democratic Governors, thirty-eight percent received an ‘A.’ Ninety-two percent of Democratic Governors received a grade of ‘C’ or higher. Among Republican Governors, only thirty-eight percent received a grade of a ‘C’ or higher. Thirty-one percent received a failing grade.

The Takeaway

Political support among US governors for marijuana policy reform continues to grow. However, this support is more partisan than ever before. No Republicans are on record in support of adult-use legalization and few are in favor of regulating medical cannabis access. By contrast, a large percentage of Democrats are supportive of both issues. This partisan divide is not similarly reflected among the general public. According to national polling data compiled by Gallup in October 2019, 66 percent of the public -- including majorities of self-identified Democrats, Republicans, and Independents -- favor adult-use legalization. Bipartisan support among the public for medical marijuana legalization is even stronger. Until this public support is similarly reflected among lawmakers, many cannabis-specific legislative reforms – particularly adult-use legalization proposals – will continue to meet resistance at the state level.
Among Republican Governors, only one received a grade of a ‘B’ or higher. Only thirty-eight percent received a grade of a ‘C’ or higher. Thirty-one percent received a failing grade.

Among Democratic Governors, thirty-eight percent received an ‘A.’ Ninety-two percent of Democratic Governors received a grade of ‘C’ or higher. None received a failing grade.
Governor Kay Ivey (R)

Governor Ivey signed legislation, Senate Bill 236, establishing a study commission to make recommendations to the 2020 legislature regarding whether to legalize and regulate medical cannabis access. The group recommended lawmakers establish a tightly-regulated medical marijuana program.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

None

Comments

In 2017, a representative from the Governor's office told NORML, “We have no statement on marijuana [nor] has the Governor made any statement on marijuana.” When asked about her stance in 2018 by AL.com, the Governor's office declined to answer. Governor Ivey did not appear to make any prominent public statements about the subject in 2019.
Governor Mike Dunleavy (R)

2019 Enacted Legislation
None

2019 Vetoed Legislation
None

Comments
Governor Dunleavy at one point expressed an intent to repeal the state's Marijuana Control Board, but he later backed off this proposal. Industry insiders have expressed concerns regarding some of the Governor's appointments to the Board, as well as his support for the passage of enhanced criminal penalties for certain cannabis-related crimes. Nonetheless, in March, Alaska regulators did finalize rules governing the licensing of on-site consumption establishments, making it the first state in the nation to do so.
2019 Enacted Legislation

Governor Ducey signed Senate Bill 1494, which establishes regulations for the third-party lab testing of medical cannabis products sold at retail dispensaries.

He also signed into law legislation reducing the fee associated with procuring a medical cannabis patient ID card.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

None

Comments

Governor Ducey opposed a 2016 statewide ballot initiative that sought to legalize adult marijuana use; in 2019, he affirmed that his views on this issue have not changed.

“I don’t think any state ever got stronger by being stoned.”
Arkansas voters passed a 2016 initiated measure legalizing medical cannabis access, but it took until 2019 before regulators approved the first applicants to operate medical marijuana dispensaries. By the end of the year, 12 dispensaries were operational in the state. The Governor, who historically has been opposed to cannabis liberalization policies, opined that the state's rollout of the new law was not unduly delayed. Rather, he said that the slow roll-out process was “measured” and that the law was implemented in a way that was “best for all Arkansans.

“While some have complained that this process has taken too long, the commission took the time it needed to get this right.”
Governor Gavin Newsom (D)

2019 Enacted Legislation

Governor Newsom signed several marijuana-related bills into law in 2019. These include

- **Senate Bill 34**, which provides tax breaks for facilities that provide free medical cannabis to disadvantaged patients,
- **Assembly Bill 420**, which authorizes the University of California's Center for Medicinal Cannabis Research to cultivate cannabis for clinical trials, and
- **Senate Bill 223**, which permits parents or guardians to administer non-smoked formulations of cannabis to patients while on K-12 school campuses. Former Gov. Jerry Brown had previously vetoed legislation similar to SB 223 and SB 34.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

The Governor vetoed Senate Bill 305, which sought to mandate certain health facilities to allow terminally ill patients the option to use medical cannabis on their premises. Governor Newsom indicated that he supported the bill's intent, but opined that it "would create significant conflicts between federal and state law."

He also signed an omnibus transportation bill that banned cannabis use in limousines and corporate buses.
In 2019, Governor Newsom signed a general order mobilizing the national guard to combat illicit cannabis grow operations, among other activities.

He has also called for consolidating the various regulatory departments that oversee licensed cannabis production and retail sale activities in the state. “Establishing a stand-alone department with dedicated enforcement will centralize and align critical regulatory functions to build a successful legal cannabis market, and create a single point of contact for cannabis licensees and local governments,” Newsom stated in his 2020 budget plan.
Governor Jared Polis (D)

2019 Enacted Legislation

Governor Polis signed several marijuana-related measures into law in 2019. Most prominent among them were:

- **House Bill 1230**, which establishes licensing requirements and regulations for the establishment of on-site marijuana consumption facilities,

- **House Bill 1234**, which regulates the home-delivery of both medical marijuana and adult-use cannabis products.

- **House Bill 1263**, which reduces criminal penalties for certain marijuana-related offenses.

- The Governor also signed separate legislation, **House Bill 1028 and Senate Bill 13**, expanding medical cannabis access.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

None
Before his election as Governor, Jared Polis was an outspoken advocate for marijuana legalization while serving as a member of Congress and sponsored several bills to amend federal cannabis laws. As Governor, he has repeatedly called on federal officials not to interfere in states that have legalized marijuana access.

“The cannabis industry in Colorado is thriving – the state has reached $1 billion in marijuana tax revenue. We must continue to lead the way. We want Colorado to be the best state for investment, innovation, and development for this growing economic sector.”
Despite promising to make adult-use marijuana legalization one of his administration's top 2019 priorities, lawmakers failed to advance legislation to the Governor's desk.

"I think I would only consider it [adult-use marijuana legalization] if we were doing it in conjunction with other states. If Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania — if we bring in Massachusetts and coordinate our policies there, rather than being an outlier — I think it's something I would push."

“It’s just a hodgepodge right now. .... Whatever we do, let’s do it on a regional basis. Let’s regulate it and standardize it.”

The Governor “remains committed to working with neighboring governors and members of the legislature to develop the best approach.”
Governor John Carney (D)

**2019 Enacted Legislation**

Governor Carney signed several marijuana-related bills into law in 2019. Specifically, he signed:

- Senate Bill 37, which expands the pool of those eligible to seek an expungement of their criminal records,
- Senate Bill 45, which eliminates criminal penalties for low-level marijuana offenses for those under 21 years of age, and
- Senate Bill 24, which expands physicians’ discretion to recommend medical cannabis therapy to patients – including those who suffer from disorders not explicitly listed among the state’s list of pre-qualifying conditions.

**2019 Vetoed Legislation**

None

**Comments**

On the subject of adult-use marijuana legalization, Gov. Carney remains noncommittal. “There are still unanswered questions, and [Governor Carney] believes we should continue to monitor progress in other states that have legalized.”
Florida

Governor Ron DeSantis (R)

NORML grade - C-

2019 Enacted Legislation

Governor Desantis signed legislation, Senate Bill 182, repealing a legislative ban on the possession and use of herbal cannabis formulations by qualified patients. He had strongly encouraged lawmakers to repeal the herbal cannabis ban, which had been supported by his predecessor, Gov. Rick Scott. The Desantis' administration also moved forward with legal and regulatory changes to facilitate the establishment of additional licensed dispensaries in the state.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

None

Comments

The Governor remains opposed to broader marijuana law reforms, stating that adult-use legalization will not become law in Florida “while I'm Governor.”
Governor Brian Kemp (R) signed **House Bill 324**, which establishes a regulatory commission to facilitate rules governing the establishment of state-licensed manufacturers of low-THC extract oils. Under state law, the possession of low-THC extracts is legal for certain qualified patients, but there exists no regulated supply source for them to obtain these products.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

None

Comments

"Instead of crossing state lines, breaking numerous laws in the process, these families can now stay in our great state. We are ensuring that these families can purchase what works for their loved ones without creating a slippery slope."
2019 Enacted Legislation

Governor Ige permitted House Bill 1383 to become law absent his signature. It eliminated criminal penalties for activities involving the possession of up to three grams of marijuana. It also provides procedures for the courts to grant an expungement order for those previously convicted of a marijuana possession offense involving no more than three grams.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

The Governor vetoed legislation, House Bill 290, which sought to authorize qualifying patients to transport medical cannabis between islands. He opined: “Marijuana, including medical cannabis, remains illegal under federal law. Both the airspace and certain bodies of water fall within the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal government. This bill may lead travelers, acting in reliance on this provision, to erroneously believe they are immune from federal prosecution.”

Comments

In 2019, Governor Ige continued to express skepticism toward the subject of further liberalizing marijuana policies. He favors waiting to see how other states address the issue. Hawaii “can benefit from not being at the head of the table.”
Governor Brad Little (R)

2019 Enacted Legislation
None

2019 Vetoed Legislation
None

Comments
Governor Little has historically been opposed to most all marijuana liberalization proposals, including those specific to medical cannabis access and industrial hemp production.

If Idahoans want legal marijuana, “they elected the wrong guy as governor.”
Governor JB Pritzker (D)

NORML Grade

**2019 Enacted Legislation**

Governor Pritzker signed into law **House Bill 1438** (aka the Cannabis Regulation and Taxation Act), which regulates the production, use, and retail sale of cannabis by adults. It also facilitates the automatic expungement of low-level marijuana convictions, decriminalizes home cultivation by adults, and legalizes personal cultivation for qualified patients. **Governor Pritzker is the first elected official** to ever sign comprehensive, adult-use marijuana legalization into law. **Similar laws in other states had all been enacted via voter initiative.**

The Governor also signed several separate bills expanding the state’s medical cannabis access law. **Senate Bill 2023** adds new qualifying conditions to the access program and permits physician's assistants to issue medical marijuana recommendations.

**Senate Bill 455** permits qualified patients to access certain medicinal cannabis products while on school grounds.

**2019 Vetoed Legislation**

None
Governor JB Pritzker (D)

Comments

On December 31, Gov. Pritzker's office issued over 11,000 pardons to those with low-level marijuana convictions.

“The purpose of this legislation is not to immediately make cannabis widely available or to maximize product on the shelves. Instead, the defining purpose of legalization is to maximize equity.”

“[W]hen you’re buying an illegal product from an illegal seller, that illegal seller is also selling other illegal drugs. And so I think the availability of cannabis is making it safer for families and for people who are looking to consume because they can go to a regulated dispensary and purchase a well-manufactured product that is safe.”
Governor Eric Holcomb (R)

2019 Enacted Legislation
None

2019 Vetoed Legislation
None

Comments
Governor Holcomb has historically voiced opposition toward reforming marijuana laws, including opposing efforts to provide medical cannabis access. He continued to affirm this viewpoint in 2019, stating that he will continue to oppose both medical and adult-use legalization efforts in Indiana as long as cannabis remains illegal under federal law.

“If the [federal marijuana] law changed, we would look at all the positive or adverse impacts it would have. I’m not convinced other states have made a wise decision.”

“Right now, it’s a crime. I’m just simply not willing to look the other way.”
In her veto message, she stated: "Ultimately, I believe Iowa must proceed cautiously to ensure that any expansion of our medical CBD program is thoughtful and deliberate. ... So I look forward to working with the Legislature and the Medical Cannabidiol Board to find an evidence-based THC limit... The health and safety of Iowans is too important for us not to get this right."

**Comments**

Lawmakers are expected to move legislation similar to HF 732 in the 2020 legislative session. Governor Reynolds most recently said that she “supported” many provisions in that legislation, but that she continues to oppose efforts to raise the existing 3 percent THC cap on medical cannabis products.
Kansas

Governor Laura Kelly (D)

NORML Grade

B−

2019 Enacted Legislation

Governor Kelly signed Senate Bill 28 (aka Clare and Lola’s Law), which prohibits state agencies from initiating child removal proceedings or child protection actions based solely upon the child or parent’s possession of certain high-CBD/low-THC cannabis preparations. The law also establishes an affirmative defense from criminal prosecution for any person with a debilitating medical condition who possesses high-CBD/low-THC cannabis preparations.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

None

Comments

Governor Kelly has repeatedly expressed support for the establishment of a tightly regulated medical cannabis access law, and most recently said that the passage of such a bill is part of her personal agenda for the 2020 legislative session. While not a personal supporter of adult-use legalization, she has said that she would “probably” sign such a bill into law if the legislature passed it.

“I do believe that medical marijuana needs to be legalized. It does have medical uses, and I think it would do a lot for our families ... and I also think that it would help with the opioid crisis.”

“[Adult-use legalization] is something where what the people want is probably more what I will want on something like that. I don’t have a personal ideology regarding it. If the folks want it and the legislature passes it, would I sign it? Probably.”
Governor Andy Beshear (D)

NORML Grade B–

2019 Enacted Legislation
N/A

2019 Vetoed Legislation
N/A

 Comments

Former state Attorney General Andy Beshear narrowly defeated Republican incumbent Matt Bevins on November 5, 2019. During his gubernatorial campaign, Beshear acknowledged: “I support placing medical marijuana legalization on the ballot as a constitutional amendment and would vote in its favor. I would vote for it because I’ve seen the impact opioids have had on every Kentucky community. So many Kentucky families have seen a loved one fall into addiction, and their lives have been devastated. If medical marijuana is an alternative and gives people the chance to get pain relief without being subjected to opioids, I think it’s something we’ve got to explore.”
Lawmakers initially approved legislation legalizing the licensed production and distribution of medical cannabis products in 2016; in 2019 regulators finally approved some of the state's first operational dispensaries.

Governor Bel Edwards also signed into law House Bill 358, which for the first time allows patients to obtain herbal formulations of medical cannabis.

Governor Bel Edwards remains opposed to legalizing and regulating marijuana for adult-use.
Governor Janet Mills (D)

2019 Enacted Legislation

Governor Mills signed legislation, LD 719, into law finalizing regulations to oversee the licensed production and retail sale of marijuana to adults. Voters had decided in favor of the plan in 2016, but former Gov. Paul LePage opposed the law and delayed its implementation.

Retail marijuana facilities are anticipated to be operational by this spring.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

None

Comments

"Over the course of the last several months, my administration has worked quickly to implement the law regarding Maine’s adult-use recreational marijuana market as Maine voters asked the state to do two and a half years ago. The rule development demonstrates what can be accomplished when state government works with lawmakers, industry stakeholders, and the public to accomplish a shared goal. With this law, we are one step closer to honoring the will of Maine voters."
Maryland

Governor Larry Hogan (R)

NORML Grade

2019 Enacted Legislation

Governor Hogan signed House Bill 17, which for the first time permits state-authorized dispensaries to provide cannabis-infused edible products to qualified patients. It also authorizes academic institutions to obtain research-grade cannabis from state-licensed providers to conduct research trials.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

None

Comments

The Governor did not appear to make any prominent public statements in 2019 specific to his views on marijuana policy. In 2018, he voiced his support for the regulation of medical marijuana and acknowledged that adult-use legalization was “worth taking a look at.”
In 2019, state regulators created a pilot program to provide for a limited number of licensed, on-site cannabis consumption facilities – a decision that the Governor publicly supported. Later in the year, the Baker administration pushed through a temporary ban on the retail sale of THC vaping products. That ban was lifted in December after regulators enacted new rules providing for the testing and inspection of vapor products.

Although Gov. Baker previously opposed legalization efforts in Massachusetts, in 2019 he publicly called upon Congress to amend federal law so that banks could provide financial services to state-licensed cannabis operators. “I still think that the first thing we need to do... is to take the cash to the extent that we can out of the system and have this treated the same way other industries deal with financial transactions.”

“I think the issues around ... social consumption sites, and all that comes with [them], are really hard and are really complicated. I think doing it on a pilot basis would make a lot of sense.”
In 2019, the Whitmer administration oversaw the roll-out of state-licensed adult-use marijuana sales. As Governor, she has continued to publicly voice her support for legalization and for the need to enact legislation expunging the criminal records of low-level marijuana offenders.

“I am proud of the work we did to pass Prop 1 [Michigan’s adult-use marijuana initiative]... Stay safe and have fun at Hash Bash 2019!”

“Governor Whitmer does not have the legal authority to unilaterally expunge marijuana convictions, but is open to discussing this issue with her legislative partners to ensure that residents do not bear a lifelong record for conduct that would now be legal at the state level.”
Governor Tim Walz (D) has been an outspoken advocate for adult-use marijuana legalization. In 2019, he ordered state agencies to begin taking steps to prepare for a change in the law. Despite the Governor's support, legislation to legalize and regulate adult marijuana use has been met with staunch opposition from the Republican-controlled Senate.

“My agencies have been tasked to put all of the building blocks in place, from Revenue to the Department of Public Safety to the Department of Health. We will have everything ready to go, and we will be able to implement it in Minnesota the minute the Legislature moves this.”
Tate Reeves was elected Governor on November 5, 2019, replacing Republican Phil Bryant. Before the election, Reeves said that he opposed legalizing medical cannabis access, but said that he would not stand in the way of implementing such a law if approved by Mississippi voters.

“As a father of three girls, I'm going to vote against the amendment that's on the ballot next year [to legalize medical cannabis access. If I am elected governor and the people of Mississippi decide to vote a different way than I do then I'm going to uphold the will of the people.”
Governor Mike Parson (R)

The Parson administration has overseen the establishment of the state's medical cannabis access program, which was approved by voters in November 2018. Regulators have approved over 17,000 patients into the program, which is expected to become fully operational later this year.

When asked the question, "Do you think that recreational marijuana could be in the future for Missouri?", Gov. Parsons responded: “Oh I'm sure there's going to be discussion about that in the future you know right now I think we've got all we can worry about with Medical Marijuana. Trying to figure out how we're going to implement that and so right now we're focused on that. We're not even having a conversation about recreational marijuana.”
Governor Bullock signed Senate Bill 265 into law in 2019, which made various regulatory changes to the state’s medical cannabis access law, including setting rules for the laboratory testing of marijuana products and allowing patients to receive recommendations via telemedicine.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

None

Comments

While campaigning in 2019 for the Democratic Presidential nomination, Gov. Bullock repeatedly said that decisions involving legalizing marijuana “should be left up to the states... I think the federal government should get out of the way.”
A separate commentary authored by the Governor in 2020, entitled “An Honest Look at Marijuana,” concludes: "As Governor, I have a duty to promote public safety. I want Nebraskans to be informed of the dangers of marijuana and to know where I stand on the issue. I firmly oppose legislative legalization and will veto any legislation that attempts to make marijuana use lawful in the Cornhusker State."
Governor Sisolak signed a variety of bills into law in 2019 specific to marijuana law reform.

- **Assembly Bill 132** imposes workplace protections for certain prospective employees who consume cannabis in private,

- **Assembly Bill 192** facilitates the sealing of criminal records specific to cannabis-related activities that are no longer illegal,

- **Assembly Bill 140** prohibits the courts from denying child custody or visitation based solely upon the parents' status as medical cannabis patients,

- **Senate Bill 430** expands the pool of patients eligible for medical cannabis therapy to include those diagnosed with autism and opioid addiction, among other conditions,

- **Senate Bill 32** seeks to provide greater transparency in the state’s marijuana-related licensing processes, and

- **Assembly Bill 466** establishes a closed-loop framework within the state to address marijuana-related banking issues.
Governor Steve Sisolak (D)

Comments

In the fall, the Governor announced efforts to increase oversight and transparency in the commercial cannabis industry, stating, “Effective immediately, any marijuana entity — licensed or unlicensed — that violates the law will see swift and severe criminal and regulatory action.”

2019 Vetoed Legislation

None

NORML Grade A
Governor Chris Sununu (R)

New Hampshire

STATE

2019 Enacted Legislation

Governor Sununu signed two bills into law in 2019 specific to marijuana law reform.

- **House Bill 350** permits physician’s assistants to make medical cannabis recommendations and
- **House Bill 399** allows those with low-level marijuana convictions to petition the court for an annulment.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

Governor Sununu vetoed several bills specific to marijuana law reform.

- Governor Sununu vetoed legislation that sought to eliminate a mandatory three-month waiting period for patients seeking medical cannabis recommendations. Lawmakers ultimately overrode his veto.
He also vetoed legislation, House Bill 364, which sought to allow patients registered in the state’s medical cannabis access program the option to home-cultivate up to three cannabis plants. In his veto message, the Governor opined that allowing patients to grow their own medical cannabis would "make the job of law enforcement significantly more difficult," and also suggested that it might reduce the number of patients soliciting the state’s dispensaries.

The Governor also vetoed Senate Bill 145, which sought to allow dispensaries to operate as ‘for profit’ entities rather than as non-profits, stating, “[T]his bill would represent too great a step toward a dangerous path of industrial commercialization of the marijuana industry in New Hampshire.”

Governor Sununu in 2019 repeatedly expressed strong opposition to any legislative proposals that sought to legalize adult-use marijuana, making it clear that he would “absolutely” veto any legislation that made it to his desk.

“Now is not the time for the recreational legalization of cannabis in New Hampshire.”
In 2019, Gov. Murphy signed Assembly Bill 20 into law, significantly expanding patients’ medical cannabis access. It expands the pool of patients who may receive medical cannabis therapy as well as the pool of medical professionals who may issue recommendations. It also imposes legal protections for patients by protecting them from discrimination in the workplace, in hospitals, or on school grounds, among other changes.

The Governor also signed legislation, Assembly Bill 5981, facilitating the expungement of low-level marijuana crimes and certain other offenses.

Governor Murphy vetoed a less comprehensive expungement measure early in the legislative session, stating that it did not go far enough to make expungements accessible to those who would benefit from them.

Legislation to enact legalization stalled in the Senate in 2019. Nonetheless, Gov. Murphy continues to be a vocal advocate of adult-use marijuana legalization. Voters will decide on the issue this November. “It’s hard to do it [adult-use legalization] legislatively, I admit. It’s always been a default to go to a referendum and ask the people.”
Governor Lujan Grisham signed several cannabis-related bills into law in 2019.

- **Senate Bill 323** decriminalizes cannabis possession up to one-half-ounce of marijuana,
- **Senate Bill 370** permits those convicted of certain low-level cannabis-related crimes to petition for expungement of their record.
- **Senate Bill 204** and Senate Bill 206 greatly expanded patients’ access to medical cannabis and protected qualified patients from discrimination.
- Governor Lujan Grisham also oversaw the establishment of a task-force to study issues about adult-use cannabis regulation and to make policy recommendations to the legislature.

### 2019 Vetoed Legislation

None
Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham (D)

Comments

Governor Lujan Grisham has called on lawmakers in the 2020 legislative session to pass legislation regulating adult-use cannabis sales. “Recreational cannabis is an economic game-changer. It is an incredibly important opportunity. We are serious about getting it passed.”

“This is the fact: recreational cannabis can be the next frontier of our economic expansion. We can get in on the ground floor or we can try to play catch up. I know which one I prefer. And I know which one New Mexicans prefer.”
Governor Andrew Cuomo (D)

New York

2019 Enacted Legislation

Governor Cuomo signed Assembly Bill 8420-A into law in 2019, which significantly reduced penalties for low-level marijuana possession offenses, expanded the state’s existing decriminalization law, and facilitated a process for the automatic review and expungement of criminal records involving offenses specific to the possession of up to 25 grams of cannabis.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

None

Comments

Governor Cuomo publicly voiced support legalization and included legalization language in his 2019 state budget proposal, but these provisions were ultimately rejected by lawmakers. In his 2020 State of the State address, he reiterated his support for adult-use legalization and is once again pushing to include legalization as part of his 2020 budget plan.

“Let's legalize adult-use cannabis, working with neighboring states to coordinate a safe and fair system. And let's create a Global Cannabis and Hemp Research Center with SUNY so New York can lead the way.”

“I believe the budget is the opportunity, frankly, to make some tough decisions and work through tough issues that without the budget can often languish, and I suggest that we get it done in the budget.”
North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper (D) told WXII news he did not think the time was right for the state to consider legalizing marijuana for adult-use.

2019 Enacted Legislation
None

2019 Vetoed Legislation
None

Comments
North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper told WXII news he did not think the time was right for the state to consider legalizing marijuana for adult-use.

NORML Grade D
Governor Doug Burgum (R) of North Dakota has historically expressed opposition to broader, adult-use marijuana legalization. He did not make any public statements in 2019 to indicate that he has changed this position.

### 2019 Enacted Legislation

Governor Burgum signed several marijuana-related bills into law in 2019.

- **House Bill 1050** reduced penalties for activities specific to the possession of one-half an ounce of marijuana or the possession of marijuana-related paraphernalia.

- **House Bill 1283, House Bill 1417, and House Bill 1283** expanded patients' access to medical cannabis.

- With the support of the Governor's office, state officials enacted new procedures in 2019 permitting those with low-level marijuana possession convictions to seek unconditional pardons.

### 2019 Vetoed Legislation

None

### Comments

Governor Burgum has historically expressed opposition to broader, adult-use marijuana legalization. He did not make any public statements in 2019 to indicate that he has changed this position.
Governor Mike DeWine (R)

Ohio

Comments

Governor DeWine has long maintained a public position “against the legalization of recreational marijuana.” That position has not changed despite the recent enactment of legalization in nearby states. Most recently, he reaffirmed, “It would really be a mistake for Ohio, by legislation, to say that marijuana for adults is just okay.”
Governor Kevin Stitt (R) 

NORML Grade: B–

2019 Enacted Legislation

Governor Stitt’s administration oversaw the growth of the nation’s largest, per capita, medical cannabis access program, and signed several marijuana-related bills into law.

- **Senate Bill 162 and Senate Bill 754** expanded the pool of medical professionals eligible to recommend medical marijuana to include those licensed by the State Board of Osteopathic Examiners and nurse practitioners.
- **House Bill 2612** strengthened patient protections by explicitly stipulating that registered cannabis consumers may not be denied public assistance, access to firearms, or certain types of employment solely based upon their patient status.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

None

Comments

While the Governor has expressed personal opposition to adult-use legalization, he has also said that he would respect the will of the voters if they decide differently.
Governor Brown signed several bills into law in 2019.

- **Senate Bill 420** facilitates new, streamlined procedures for those previously convicted of minor possession offenses to file to have their convictions set aside.

- **Senate Bill 582** authorizes Oregon to enter into agreements with other states regarding the exportation of cannabis products across state lines.

- **Senate Bill 970** prohibits landlords from taking discriminatory action against those who either use medical cannabis or possess cannabis-related convictions.

- In response to reports of falling retail cannabis prices, the Governor also signed legislation, **Senate Bill 218**, authorizing state regulators to limit the issuance of new commercial growers' licenses when/if they see fit.

### 2019 Vetoed Legislation

None
Governor Kate Brown (D)

NORML Grade A

Comments

Governor Brown has long been an outspoken advocate of marijuana law reform and adult-use legalization, stating, “Voters in Oregon were clear when they chose for Oregon to legalize the sale of marijuana and the federal government should not stand in the way of the will of Oregonians.”
Governor Tom Wolf (D)

Pennsylvania

Governor Wolf’s position on cannabis legalization has evolved in recent years. In 2019, for the first time, the Governor expressed support for regulating adult-use cannabis activities.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

None

2019 Enacted Legislation

Governor Wolf’s administration oversaw efforts to create an expedited review process for pardoning those with past, low-level marijuana-related convictions. “These efforts to move more Pennsylvanians through the pardons process is part of a larger effort to do all that we can do to give people a fair second chance.”

50 NORML Grade

Comments

“I think it’s time for the General Assembly to sit down and craft a bill that actually recognizes that Pennsylvania is ready for [legalizing marijuana], and also takes advantage of what we’ve learned from other states in terms of what to do and what not to do.”
Rhode Island

Governor Gina Raimondo (D)

2019 Enacted Legislation
None

2019 Vetoed Legislation
None

Comments
The Governor's 2020 budget proposal includes a plan to allow for the retail sale of marijuana through state-run stores.

“I will say, I do this with reluctance. I have resisted this for the four years I've been governor... Now, however, things have changed, mainly because all of our neighbors are moving forward [with legalization].”
Governor Henry McMaster (R) has previously expressed his opposition toward the legalization of marijuana for adult-use. He has also failed to voice support for proposed medical marijuana access legislation. He did not make any prominent statements in 2019 to indicate that he has changed these positions.
Governor Kristi Noem (R)

NORML Grade

F

2019 Enacted Legislation

None

2019 Vetoed Legislation

Governor Noem vetoed legislation that sought to license and regulate commercial hemp production in the state, saying, “There is no question in my mind that normalizing hemp, like legalizing medical marijuana, is part of a larger strategy to undermine enforcement of the drug laws and make legalized marijuana inevitable.”

Comments

Governor Noem has historically opposed all efforts to liberalize marijuana laws in South Dakota, and she recently affirmed her opposition to a pair of 2020 ballot initiatives that seek to legalize and regulate medical cannabis and adult-use marijuana.

Marijuana is “the gateway drug to getting people more addicted, getting into stronger drugs, then they end up committing crimes, and it just opens the door to bad habits and behaviors that aren’t going to be beneficial.”
Governor Bill Lee (R)

2019 Enacted Legislation
None

2019 Vetoed Legislation
None

Comments
Governor Lee in 2019 reaffirmed his opposition to reducing criminal penalties for marijuana-related activities, stating, "I have said before and still believe that we should not decriminalize marijuana... I think that's not good for our state."

He has failed to endorse legislative efforts to legalize medical cannabis access in Tennessee, instead stating that he prefers expanding the state's CBD possession law.

That law, enacted in 2014, only provides an affirmative defense from prosecution for patients with intractable seizures who obtain CBD extracts.
Governor Greg Abbott (R)

NORML Grade

2019 Enacted Legislation

Governor Abbott signed legislation into law, House Bill 3703, greatly expanding the pool of patients eligible to participate in the state’s CBD access program. That program licenses providers to produce and dispense plant-derived CBD products. In October, however, the Texas Department of Public Safety abruptly ceased accepting licenses for those seeking to dispense CBD products to qualified patients.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

None

Comments

Governor Abbott has expressed a willingness to consider legislation decriminalizing low-level marijuana possession offenses.

He has also publicly criticized efforts by some local District Attorneys to cease filing cannabis possession prosecutions.
Governor Gary Herbert (R)

2019 Enacted Legislation

Governor Herbert signed legislation in late 2019 facilitating the production and distribution of medical cannabis products to qualified patients by allowing these activities to be coordinated by private, rather than public, entities. The new legislation undid various changes initially made by the legislature earlier in the year, several of which were later deemed to be unworkable. Voters in 2018 approved medical cannabis access, but lawmakers eventually decided to replace the law with their own legislation.

The Governor also signed separate legislation, House Bill 431, expunging certain low-level crimes, including misdemeanor marijuana possession offenses.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

None

Comments

Governor Herbert said that federal lawmakers “ought to be ashamed” for failing to amend federal marijuana policies in a manner that comports with changing state laws regulating its medical or adult use.
Governor Scott signed legislation in 2018 depenalizing minor marijuana possession and cultivation activities, but in 2019 he expressed opposition toward legislative efforts to expand the law to regulate commercial activities.

While some lawmakers seeking to enact retail licensing legislation in 2020 have predicted that they may need to override the Governor’s veto in order to enact the new law, others have expressed beliefs that the Governor has softened his stance on the issue.
Governor Ralph Northam (D)

2019 Enacted Legislation

Governor Northam signed several bills into law in 2019 specific to the state's nascent medical cannabis access program.

- Senate Bill 1557 permits physician assistants and nurse practitioners to issue medical cannabis recommendations.
- Senate Bill 1632 permits for the use of certain cannabis formulations on school grounds.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

None

Comments

Governor Northam emphasized the need to decriminalize marijuana in his 2019 State of the Commonwealth speech, and he has repeated the need to enact decriminalization and expungement legislation in the 2020 session.

“We need to take an honest look at our criminal justice system, to make sure we're treating people fairly—and using taxpayer dollars wisely. And it's time to temper justice with mercy. This means decriminalizing marijuana possession—and clearing the records of people who've gotten in trouble for it.”
Washington

Governor Jay Inslee (D)

2019 Enacted Legislation

Governor Inslee signed several marijuana-related bills in 2019.

- Senate Bill 5605 facilitates the expungement of low-level marijuana convictions.
- House Bill 1094 streamlines the medical marijuana approval process.
- House Bill 1095 permits qualified patients access to certain cannabis products while on school grounds.

2019 Vetoed Legislation

None

Comments

During his campaign for the 2020 Democratic Presidential nomination, Gov. Inslee said that "it's time to legalize marijuana nationally."

“Friday we launched our Marijuana Justice Initiative, and today I signed the first set of pardons. This effort will help relieve the burden of misdemeanors for marijuana possession and allow people to move on with their lives.”
Governor Jim Justice (R)

**2019 Enacted Legislation**

Governor Justice signed **House Bill 2536**, which encourages financial institutions to provide services to those involved in the state’s nascent medical cannabis program. That program, signed into law in 2017, is not yet operational.

**2019 Vetoed Legislation**

The Governor vetoed legislation, **House Bill 2079**, that sought to allow dispensaries to vertically integrate their activities. Lawmakers ultimately passed another version of the bill during a special legislative session.

**Comments**

“I want everyone here to understand -- I am adamantly, adamantly, etched in stone, adamantly against recreational marijuana [legalization]."
In 2019, Gov. Evers introduced language in his state budget proposal that sought to decriminalize minor marijuana possession offenses and legalize medical cannabis access. Lawmakers failed to enact either proposal.

“As a cancer survivor, I know the side effects of a major illness can make every task a struggle. People shouldn’t be treated like criminals for accessing medicine that can change or maybe even save their lives.”
Governor Mark Gordon (R)

Comments

Governor Gordon has previously expressed his opposition to the legalization of marijuana for adult-use, and he has also expressed skepticism about the use of medical cannabis. He did not make any prominent statements in 2019 to indicate that he has changed these positions.
THANK YOU!

Acknowledgements

This information is continually changing and was last updated 01/28/2020. If you have an additional public comment that we do not have record of or any additional information please email politics@norml.org.

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