

CANNABIS REFORM

The use of Cannabis is currently illegal under both federal and Virginia law. However, Virginia law has a narrow exception for the use of cannabidiol (CBD) oils to treat epilepsy. CBD does not have the mind-altering affects that are associated with the THC found in cannabis.

On the federal level, while campaigning for President, Donald Trump stated that he viewed cannabis legalization as a matter of states' rights. However, Republican Attorney General Jeff Sessions has called for a crackdown on states that have legalized cannabis and expressed skepticism about the medical uses of cannabis. A bi-partisan group of seven Republicans and six Democrats have introduced the Respect State Marijuana Laws Act H.R. 975 which would decriminalize "acting in compliance with State laws relating to the production, possession, distribution, dispensation, administration or delivery of marijuana." Virginia Congressman Garrett has introduced H.R. 1227, the Ending Federal Marijuana Prohibition Act of 2017, which would decriminalize cannabis more generally. Finally, Virginia Congressman Griffith has introduced H.R. 715 Compassionate Access Act, which would decriminalize CBD and would move marijuana from Schedule I to a lower schedule of the Controlled Substances Act.

In Virginia, Senator Adam Ebbin sponsored a bill enacted as Chapter 703 of the Laws of 2017 which replaced the requirement that a person convicted of simple possession of cannabis have his or her driver's license suspended for six months with 50 hours of community service and deferred disposition of the offense.

Nationwide polls conducted by CBS News and Quinnipiac University find that 60% of U.S. voters believe that "the use of marijuana should be made legal." A higher 88% support regulating the medical use of marijuana, and 77% oppose efforts by the federal government to interfere with states that have legalized the plant's distribution and use.

Absent federal roadblocks, industrial hemp is a promising crop for rural Virginia and could aid in revitalizing a sector of our economy that has been harmed by the reduction in tobacco industry.

RESOLVED, by the Eighth District Democratic Convention on May 20, 2017, that:

1. We support bi-partisan efforts to allow states to establish their own regulatory scheme for cannabis distribution and use.
2. Virginia cooperative extension should conduct outreach programs on industrial hemp cultivation.
3. Medical use of cannabidiol (CBD) should be expanded beyond epilepsy and obstacles should be cleared from both the state and federal levels.