

After nearly a century of war being waged against users and cultivators of marijuana resulting in a prison population that has grown to epic proportions the people of the United States have voted that enough is enough.

As of 2019, more than half the United States have voted for some form of legal trade in Marijuana spanning a timeline of over 20 years. In 1996 California became the first state to legalize Marijuana medically with Washington D.C. following soon after in 1998. In 2012, Colorado and Washington State voted and became the first states to grant completely legal status, referred to as "Recreational" status. By 2014, the people of Washington D.C. voted for fully legal status.

However, full legal status has yet to become reality, anywhere, due to a Federal barricade. Businesses are prevented from opening and for those that do manage to function, their funds are being denied access into the banking system and are illegal in the eyes of the Federal government, despite a proven voting pattern.

The Federal Government's intimidation is preventing the overthrow of Prohibition Laws. Although the people have spoken, "The Feds" aren't ready to give up the fight against Ganja businesses. Even in localities where canna-businesses operate in the open, "The Feds" still treat Ganja money as "Drug Money" and seize it, causing banks not to offer financial services. Additionally, Ganja entrepreneurs continue to face imprisonment, which can lead to separation of families, children becoming wards of the state, and seizure of property. Overcrowding of prisons due to non-violent cannabis related crimes warrants it's very own website due to the injustice. Overall, this situation constitutes an unnecessary mess.

The Federal government has also demonstrated a legislative stronghold through red tape and technicalities that continue to devalue the vote, especially in Washington D.C. It all began innocently in 1996 when California became the first state to legalize the medical use of Marijuana with the "Compassionate Use Act." In 1998, Washington D.C. simply voted to do the same, yet the first medical sale was effectively delayed until 2013-fifteen years later!

In what has been considered the biggest attack on democracy and gross violation of the First Amendment rights, The Barr Amendment was unleashed upon an unsuspecting public. This Barr Amendment-Initiative 59, presented by Congressman Robert Barr, issued language that defunded the very process by which votes are tallied. As a result, the actual vote was rendered utterly useless as ballots couldn't officially be counted due to the blocking of funds for such purposes!

The Federal government bulldozed over the vote again in D.C. in 2014 in the form of the Harris Amendment. While voters rallied and successfully agreed upon full legal status, the ranking of the drug as Schedule 1 was never amended. As such, Congress sought to block

D.C.'s legalization efforts through another rider and more technicalities. On June 25, 2014, House Republicans, led by Maryland's representative Andy Harris once again blocked funding in the form of The Harris amendment which banned the D.C. government from spending any funds on efforts to lessen penalties for Schedule 1 Federal Drug crimes. In addition, Representatives Jason Chaffetz and Mark Meadows sent a letter to Mayor Muriel Bowser at the time, urging her to not move forward with Initiative 71 that would legalize marijuana due to the landslide vote.

Congressional Republicans, including the rider's author's Andy Harris, threatened prison time for the D.C. mayor and others involved, suggesting that they could be prosecuted by the Justice Department under the Anti-Deficiency Act, which "imposes criminal penalties on government employees who knowingly spend public funds in excess of their appropriated budgets." The combined efforts of the Amendment and the intimidation letter that threatened imprisonment made it nearly impossible to implement the will of the people.

The most sensible actions relative to legitimizing the industry and the money have taken place in Colorado. Shortly after the people of Colorado voted to make Ganja fully legal, the Governor enacted a law permitting the formation of Cannabis Credit Co-ops. This allowed industry related businesses to join together in a cooperative to put their money in the system.

For protection of these entities, Senator Ed Perlmutter of Colorado introduced the Secure and Fair Enforcement of Banking Act-HR 2215 providing a safe harbour to banks and other financial institutions that provide banking services to legitimate canna-businesses. Sadly the first Credit Co-op has been denied permission to provide services to dispensaries and has been relegated to servicing ancillary businesses such as landlords and accountants. [Learn More](#)

Californians are also moving the needle. Treasurer John Chiang, has convened a [Cannabis Banking Working Group](#) made up of representatives from law enforcement, banks, local government, regulators and taxing authorities to find solutions. The group's mission statement is to: "To develop actionable steps and recommendations designed to open access to the banking system to cannabis related industries to allow an industry that is now legal in California to fully and effectively participate in commerce." State Treasurer Jon Chiang of California has also written a letter of support for Colorado's initiative in addition to forming the Cannabis Coalition.

The historical timeline showcases consistency in voter pattern, yet continuous barricades from government to impede the efforts. As Americans we must have the courage to live in a

truly “Free Society” that accepts other ways of life. Given that America is the “Land of the Free” and “Home of the Brave” there should be no fear and no consequence of allowing this money into the open.