

US House votes for pot decriminalization

Item 10b.

Bill unlikely to advance in GOP-controlled Senate

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ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON – The Democratic-controlled House on Friday approved a bill to decriminalize and tax marijuana at the federal level, reversing what supporters called a failed policy of criminalization of pot use and taking steps to address racial disparities in enforcement of federal drug laws.

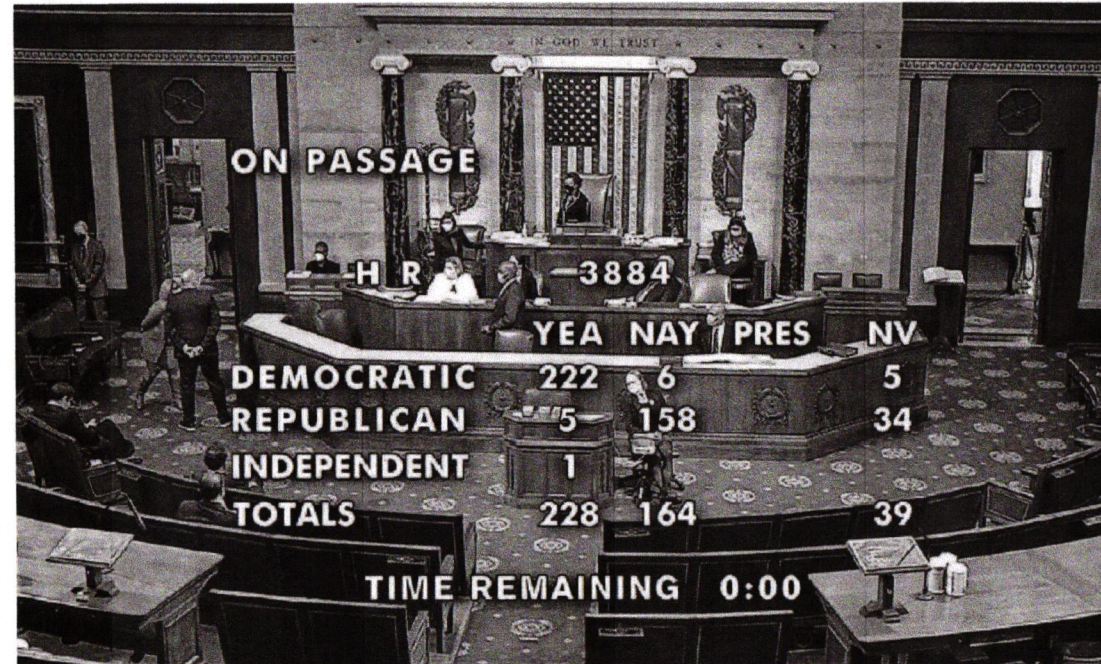
Opponents, mostly Republicans, called the bill a hollow political gesture and mocked Democrats for bringing it up at a time when thousands of Americans are dying from the coronavirus pandemic.

“With all the challenges America has right now, (Republicans) think COVID relief should be on the floor, but instead, the Democrats put cats and cannabis” on the House floor, said House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-California. “They’re picking weed over the workers. They’re picking marijuana over (providing) the much-needed money we need to go forward” to address the pandemic.

McCarthy’s comment about cats referred to a separate bill approved by the House to ban private ownership of big cats such as lions and tigers, a measure boosted by the Netflix series “Tiger King.” That bill, approved by the House on Thursday, would allow most private zoos to keep their tigers and other species but would prohibit most public contact with the animals.

Democrats said they can work on COVID-19 relief and marijuana reform at the same time and noted that the House passed a major pandemic relief bill in May that has languished in the Senate.

Supporters say the pot bill would help reverse adverse effects of the decades-long “war on drugs” by removing marijuana, or cannabis, from the list of federally controlled substances while allowing states to set their own rules on pot. The bill also would use money from a new excise tax on marijuana to address the needs of groups and communities harmed by the so-called drug war and provide for the expungement of federal marijuana convictions and arrests.



The House of Representatives on Friday passed a bill to decriminalize and tax marijuana at the federal level. The bill now goes to the Republican-controlled Senate, where it is unlikely to move forward. HOUSE TELEVISION VIA AP

“For far too long, we have treated marijuana as a criminal justice problem instead of as a matter of personal choice and public health,” said Rep. Jerry Nadler, D-New York, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee and a key sponsor of the bill. “Whatever one’s views are on the use of marijuana for recreational or medicinal use, the policy of arrests, prosecution and incarceration at the federal level has proven unwise and unjust.”

Drug reform advocates called the House vote historic, noting it is the first time comprehensive legislation to decriminalize marijuana has passed the full House or Senate.

“The criminalization of marijuana is a cornerstone of the racist war on drugs. Even after a decade of reform victories (at the state level), one person was arrested nearly every minute last year for simply possessing marijuana,” said Maritza Perez, director of national affairs at

the Drug Policy Alliance, an advocacy group. “Today the House took the most powerful step forward to address that shameful legacy.”

The vote comes at a time when most Americans live in states where marijuana is legal in some form, and lawmakers from both parties agreed that national cannabis policy has lagged woefully behind changes at the state level. That divide has created a host of problems; loans and other banking services are hard to get for many marijuana companies because pot remains illegal at the federal level.

Four states, including New Jersey and Arizona, passed referenda allowing recreational cannabis this year. Voters made Oregon the first state in the nation to decriminalize possession of small amounts of cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine.

Rep. Barbara Lee, D-California, called the House bill an important racial

justice measure. Lee, who is Black, said the bill is the product of years of work by a range of advocates and is long overdue. The bill “is a major step, mind you, a major step toward ending the unjust war on drugs and racial inequities that are central to these laws,” she said.

The bill also would open up more opportunities for marijuana businesses, including access to Small Business Administration loans to help ensure that minorities can take part in an industry dominated by white farmers and growers. “This is a job-creating industry, and (the bill) also provides economic opportunities for minority-owned business owners,” Lee said.

The bill, which passed 228-164, now goes to the Republican-controlled Senate, where it is unlikely to advance. A related bill that would give pot businesses access to traditional banking services has languished in the Senate after being approved by the House last year.

FORT PIERCE POLICE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE CITIZEN'S SURVEY

We invite you to participate in this Survey to give us feedback on your opinion as a citizen of Fort Pierce, Florida concerning your knowledge and experiences with the Fort Pierce Police Department. We understand that you may have experiences with other law enforcement agencies, but please limit your responses to the Fort Pierce Police Department and only since 2015. We appreciate you taking time to give your input. This information will be used to help us best serve our community.

Do You: Live in Fort Pierce (Zip Code: _____) / Work in Fort Pierce (Zip Code: _____) / Own a Business in Fort Pierce (Zip Code: _____)

How long have you lived, worked, or owned a business in Fort Pierce? _____ **Age:** _____ **Gender:** Female / Male / Do not want to answer

Rate the top FOUR issues (1-4, 1 = greatest problem/concern) YOU think are the greatest problems/concerns in YOUR Community.

_____ Burglaries/ Thefts (Auto) _____ Burglaries (Thefts (Residential))	_____ Drug Abuse _____ Fraud	_____ Mugging _____ Physical Assault
_____ Child Abuse	_____ Identity Theft	_____ Police Brutality
_____ Child Sexual Predators/ Internet Safety	_____ Gang Activity	_____ Poor Police Community Relations
_____ Disorderly Conduct/ Public Intoxication	_____ Gun Violence	_____ Prostitution
_____ Disorderly Conduct/Noise Violations	_____ Hate Crimes	_____ School Safety (Bullying, Fighting, or Weapons)
_____ Disorderly Youth (Cruising or Gathering, etc)	_____ Homeland Security Problems	_____ Sexual Assault/Rape
_____ Domestic Violence	_____ Homelessness	_____ Traffic Issues
_____ Driving Under the Influence (Alcohol or Drugs)	_____ Home Invasions	_____ Underage Drinking
_____ Driver License Suspensions	_____ Homicide	_____ Vandalism/Graffiti
_____ Other (explain below)		

QUESTION	A GREAT DEAL	A LOT	SOME-WHAT	A LITTLE	NOT AT ALL	N/A
It is important that you answer these questions honestly and freely. Feel free to mark N/A for any survey question you do not feel comfortable answering or does not apply to your experience.						
1. How well has the FPPD (Fort Pierce Police Department) developed relationships with your community?						
2. How well does the FPPD communicate with your Community?						
3. How well does the FPPD engage members of your community to provide input, suggestions, concerns?						
4. How well does the FPPD work with members of your community to solve police related problems?						
5. How well does the FPPD work with your community to reduce crime by providing a range of activities?						
6. How well do you feel officers of the FPPD treat our citizens?						
7. How well do you feel officers of the FPPD are respectful to the public?						

FORT PIERCE POLICE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE CITIZEN'S SURVEY

QUESTION	A GREAT DEAL	A LOT	SOME- WHAT	A LITTLE	NOT AT ALL	N/A
8. How informed are you about community activities and programs sponsored by the FPPD Officers?						
It is important that you answer these questions honestly and freely. Feel free to mark N/A for any survey question you do not feel comfortable answering or does not apply to your experience.						
9. To what extent do you feel the FPPD is responsive to concerns/problems of your community?						
10. To what extent do you trust the Fort Pierce Police Department to provide accurate information?						
11. To what extent is the FPPD proactive in curbing or preventing crime in your community?						
12. To what extent are you satisfied with the overall performance of the FPPD?						
13. To what extent are you satisfied with the overall performance of the Chief of Police of the FPPD?						
14. To what extent are you satisfied with your interactions with the FPPD concerning traffic issues?						
15. To what extent are you satisfied with your contact with the FPPD response to 911 emergency call(s)?						
16. To what extent are you satisfied with your contact with the FPPD response to non-emergency call(s)?						
17. To what extent are you satisfied with other interactions with the FPPD (Records, investigations, etc.)						
18. To what extent do you feel safe in your neighborhood during the day?						
19. To what extent do you feel safe in your neighborhood during the night?						
20. Over the past 12 months, to what extent has your feelings of safety in your neighborhood increased?						
21. If you had contact with a FPPD officer in the performance of his/her duties in the past 12 months, to what extent did the officer clearly explain his/her reason for stopping you, his requests/expectations of you, the FPPD policies and procedures as it relates to the stop, and identifying him/her self?						
QUESTION	N/A	0 Times	1-2 Times	3-4 Times	5-6 Times	7 + Times
22. How many times in the past year have you had contact with the FPPD for non-emergency calls?						
23. How many times in the past year have you had contact with the FPPD for other contacts or interactions such as community meetings or talking to an officer on patrol, or seeing them in public?						
24. How many times in the past 12 months have you or a member of your family been arrested by FPPD?						
25. How many times in the past 12 months have you had contact with the FPPD for a 911 Emergency?						

Please feel free to respond to any question by indicating the number below, **OR** feel free to make any comments or recommendations that will give us more insight on your perception of the Fort Pierce Police Department. Please return this form to the Fort Pierce Police Department c/o Fort Pierce Police Advisory Committee, 920 S. U.S. Highway #1, Fort Pierce, FL 34950 or the person who gave you the form.

COMMENTS: _____

“IN HONOR WE SERVE”