

## **New Marijuana Reform Ballot Initiative Filed with Oklahoma Secretary of State**

*PRESS RELEASE*

*For Immediate Release*

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Oklahoma City, OK (December 27, 2019) – Proponents have withdrawn SQ 806 and today new language was filed for a marijuana reform ballot initiative with the Oklahoma Secretary of State to ensure that the rights and rules related to Oklahoma’s medical marijuana program will be unaffected by the constitutional amendment to legalize adult use of marijuana.

SQ 806 was filed on December 11, 2019, by two Oklahomans who believe that voters should decide the state’s marijuana laws. It created a constitutional ballot initiative to legalize, regulate, and tax marijuana for adults aged 21 and older in Oklahoma.

“The new ballot initiative strengthens the language of the previously filed initiative to ensure that we are crystal clear that this program does not adversely affect the current Oklahoma medical marijuana industry or its patients,” spokesperson Michelle Tilley said. “While we did not foresee any issues with our original language, we are strong supporters of Oklahoma’s medical marijuana programs and we felt it was worthwhile to eliminate any uncertainty.”

The new ballot initiative would allow for the personal use of marijuana by adults age 21 and older, tightly regulate marijuana business to protect consumer safety, and create a tax on marijuana sales (the new tax would not apply to medical marijuana). Revenue from marijuana sales would be used to provide tens of millions of dollars in new funding for schools and other public services in Oklahoma. The measure also strengthens the growing marijuana business sector by prioritizing existing Oklahoma medical marijuana businesses for the new licenses and allows the legislature to create further residency requirements.

“Since medical marijuana became legal in Oklahoma, not only have thousands of Oklahomans benefited as patients, many Oklahomans have invested their own money in building businesses. Those businesses have in turn created good jobs throughout the state,” Tilley explained. “This new program will expand access for all adults over 21 in Oklahoma, while protecting the existing medical marijuana program and those who need medical marijuana as patients.”

Eleven other states have successfully legalized adult use of marijuana, generating over one billion dollars in new tax revenue to fund vital services in those states.

“An overwhelming majority of Oklahomans from across the political spectrum support reforming the marijuana laws in Oklahoma. The time has come to build a system of reasonable regulations that invests millions in education and health care,” said Ryan Kiesel, a Proponent of the state question. Kiesel is an attorney who helped defend the medical marijuana state question in 2018 and he is also a current medical marijuana cardholder in Oklahoma.

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The initiative is backed by stakeholders in Oklahoma and New Approach PAC, a national marijuana reform organization that has managed successful ballot initiative campaigns to legalize medical marijuana and adult-use marijuana in multiple other states.

The petition will need nearly 178,000 signatures to put the issue on the November 2020 ballot. The Secretary of State will set the date for signature gathering to begin and supporters will then have 90 days to collect the required number of signatures in order to qualify for the November 2020 ballot.

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