



Recreational marijuana could become a reality in Florida. / Photo by Karli Evans

## With Petition Milestone, Recreational Marijuana Is One Step Closer in Florida

JESSICA LIPSCOMB | JULY 31, 2019 | 10:12AM

For years, Floridians have watched from the sidelines as states such as Colorado, California, and even Michigan have legalized recreational marijuana.

But with activists pushing to get recreational weed on the 2020 ballot in Florida, the possibility of legalization now seems likelier than ever. Yesterday the advocacy group Regulate Florida announced its petition to legalize pot has gathered more than 76,632 verified signatures – enough to trigger a review by the Florida Supreme Court.

"We have a long way to go to get it on the ballot, but we will GET IT DONE TOGETHER!!!" the organization wrote in an email newsletter. "TODAY IS THE 1st VICTORY OF MANY TO COME!!!"

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Next, the Florida Supreme Court will review the language of the prospective ballot item, which would regulate weed like alcohol in that marijuana would be legal "for limited use and growing" for anyone 21 years or older. Even if the language is approved, Regulate Florida **would still need 766,200 signatures** to put the amendment before voters.

The Florida Supreme Court review represents a significant milestone, but Regulate Florida still must hit several other targets to get recreational marijuana on the ballot. According to the group's chairman, Michael Minardi, the state has 90 days after the court's certification **to complete a financial impact statement** on the economic effects of legalizing recreational marijuana. State statutes also call for the Florida secretary of state to send the proposed amendment to Florida's attorney general, who has 30 days to give an advisory opinion and potentially challenge the validity of the petition.

A spokesman for Attorney General Ashley Moody said her office has not yet received the Regulate Florida petition. As of now, it's unclear exactly where Moody stands on legalization. The newly elected Republican has been publicly mum about virtually all marijuana legislation and **notably didn't respond** when the *Tampa Bay Times* surveyed 2018 candidates about whether they'd ever used marijuana.

Last month, a poll by Quinnipiac University **showed that 65 percent of Florida voters** support "allowing adults to legally possess small amounts of marijuana for personal use." However, **as the *Miami Herald* recently pointed out**, that support doesn't guarantee the amendment's success on Election Day.

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