



NEWS:

Bill to Legalize Recreational Marijuana Back for a Return Engagement

May 17, 2019 – Nearly 11 months after a similar bill was defeated in a close vote, a measure to legalize recreational marijuana was introduced in the State House of Representatives yesterday.

[House Bill 110](#), which intentionally uses the same bill number as last year's failed legislation, seeks to allow adults over the age of 21 to possess and consume up to one ounce of marijuana for personal use.

The proposal would not permit people to grow their own marijuana.

Proponents of the Delaware Marijuana Control Act maintain that it would regulate and tax marijuana in a fashion similar to alcoholic beverages.

Sponsored by Edward Osienski, D-Newark, the legislation is entirely a product of House and Senate Democrats, 14 of which have signed the bill as prime or co-sponsors.

Like its predecessor, the 2019 version of the Delaware Marijuana Control Act seeks to create a new fee and tax -- an act which requires a three-fifths majority, or 25 votes in the 41-member House. Last June, the first HB 110 garnered 21 "yes" votes.

Should the bill reach the House floor for a vote, it is difficult to gauge how well it will be received. The 150th General Assembly contains 12 new members that took their seats in November.

During the debate over legalization last June, State Rep. Lyndon Yearick, R-Dover South, undercut a claim that enacting the statute would ease the Delaware's opioid epidemic. "Opioid [overdose] deaths have increased, not decreased, since Colorado legalized marijuana for medical use starting in 2000," he told the chamber.

State Rep. Ruth Briggs King, R-Georgetown, also opposed the bill last year, referencing a state report on Delaware infants exposed to illegal substances while in utero. She said marijuana was responsible for over half of the infants exposed to a single illicit drug.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, [10 states](#) and the District of Columbia have legalized small amounts of marijuana for adult recreational use. Delaware is already among the 22 states that have decriminalized small amounts of marijuana and [34 states](#) with a medical marijuana program.



State Rep.
Lyndon Yearick