

» [Print](#)

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to colleagues, clients or customers, use the Reprints tool at the top of any article or visit: www.reutersreprints.com.

Washington goes to pot? U.S. capital may vote on legal marijuana

Mon, Jul 7 2014

By Moriah Costa

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Supporters of legal marijuana in Washington on Monday delivered more than double the signatures needed to put the issue on a ballot, an initiative that could face congressional opposition.

Adam Eiding, chairman of the DC Cannabis Campaign, said the group had collected about 57,000 signatures to put the measure on a Nov. 4 ballot in the U.S. capital, well over the 22,373 required by law.

"This would not open up stores. This would not lead to D.C. becoming a tourist haven," he told reporters at the District of Columbia Board of Elections.

"This is just for the citizens who live here, the residents who pay taxes, to have the right to use marijuana freely in their homes without fear of arrest, harassment or a ticket."

The measure would allow people 21 and older to possess up to 2 ounces (56 grams) of marijuana for personal use. They also could grow up to six plants at home, three of them mature and flowering.

It allows for transfer of marijuana without payment from one person to another, but not sales.

The petition could face opposition from Congress, which under the U.S. Constitution has oversight of the District of Columbia.

A District law that would decriminalize possession of up to an ounce (28 grams) of cannabis was blocked last month by the Appropriations Committee in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives.

The committee approved a spending bill that included an amendment barring the city from spending money to legalize or reduce penalties for marijuana, which could include barring the elections board from printing ballots that include the legalization measure.

Eiding said members of Congress needed to realize that legalization is a civil rights issue and not a health issue.

A study by the American Civil Liberties Union has shown that black people in Washington are eight times more likely to be arrested for possession of marijuana than people of other races.

Two states, Washington and Colorado, have legalized the recreational use of pot, which remains illegal under federal law. Washington state began to issue retail licenses on Monday.

Voters in Alaska will vote on legalization in November. Supporters of an Oregon legalization initiative have said they submitted enough signatures to put the measure on the November ballot.



© Thomson Reuters 2014. All rights reserved. Users may download and print extracts of content from this website for their own personal and non-commercial use only. Republication or redistribution of Thomson Reuters content, including by framing or similar means, is expressly prohibited without the prior written consent of Thomson Reuters. Thomson Reuters and its logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of the Thomson Reuters group of companies around the world.

Thomson Reuters journalists are subject to an Editorial Handbook which requires fair presentation and disclosure of relevant interests.

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to colleagues, clients or customers, use the Reprints tool at the top of any article or visit: www.reutersreprints.com.