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Gwinnett Commissioner Proposed Decriminalization of Small Marijuana Possession Delayed



Local News Politics



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Gwinnett Commissioner Proposed Decriminalization of Small Marijuana Possession Delayed

May 1, 2021 ② 2 min read ♣ Charlotte Reames



winnett County Commissioner Kirkland Carden proposed a resolution in mid-February that would decriminalize marijuana possession of less than one ounce.

"I definitely wanted to get the feedback of members in our law enforcement community here in Gwinnett. I also talked to members in the legal community," Carden said. "It kinda shocked me. Republican or Democrat–It's just kind of [an] overwhelming unanimous feeling that, 'Hey, this is the right move. We shouldn't be locking people up for small marijuana offenses."

The original bill proposal would remove all jail time, reduce the fine, and keep the community service requirement for marijuana possession under one ounce. However, the Citizens Advisory Board could still make further suggestions to the bill. Their suggestions are expected in May.

According to Carden, the proposal is receiving bipartisan support.

"[Law enforcement and the legal community] are two professions where they deal with the ramifications [of] the war on drugs on a regular basis," Carden said. "My friends have always told me that they just don't think it's worth derailing a kid's academic future or putting them in jail where it's harder for them to get employment and have economic opportunities after they're released [from] incarceration."

Carden also expects that the bill will increase trust between law enforcement and the community.

"One would assume it would only build up that trust for that relationship," Carden said. "I'm talking as a resident of Gwinnett Co. That shows that you're moving

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your priority away from this and over [to] the issues that are quality of life issues that we all know and care about."

According to the GA Department of Public Health, Georgia's current medical marijuana laws states that 20 fluid ounces of "low THC oil" can be obtained for individuals that qualify.

The present law does not allow the possession or sale of the substance in plant form or the "ingestion of low THC oil through vapor." It is meant primarily to protect qualified individuals from "criminal prosecution" for the possession of medicinal THC oil.

In December, a bill decriminalizing marijuana was passed in the US House of Representatives and is pending a vote in the US Senate.

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Gwinnett County Commissioner Kirkland Carden proposed a resolution in mid-February that would decriminalize marijuana possession of less than one ounce. 251



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