

Desantis Vetos SB 1698

Leafy8 discusses recent news of DeSantis's veto of SB 1698, a bill that would have banned Delta-8 and other cannabinoids.

ORLANDO, FL, UNITED STATES, June 10, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- After the Senate and House of Representatives passed [SB 1698](#) in Florida, the hemp community looked to their governor for help to save jobs, businesses, and consumers. Miraculously, Ron Desantis vetoed the bill, saving thousands of jobs and an entire industry.

Earlier this year, Florida lawmakers proposed a ban on Delta-8 THC and even some CBD extracts. If imposed, it would have changed the legal definition of "hemp" to exclude synthetic AND naturally occurring cannabinoids such as Delta-8 THC, HHC, and more.

“

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Ron Desantis

This bill proposed strict regulations on the sale and distribution of Delta-9. The bill stated that products would only be distributed and sold in Florida if the product had a passing certificate analysis by an independent testing laboratory. This certificate must state the following:

The hemp extract is the product of a batch tested by the independent testing laboratory;

The batch contained a total delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol concentration that did not exceed 0.3 percent by wet weight.

The batch must meet the total delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol concentration limits: 5mg per serving and 50 mg per container

The batch does not contain contaminants unsafe for human



Ron Desantis announces the veto of Bill SB 1698 on June 7th

The batch was processed in a facility that facility meets the human health or food safety sanitization requirements.

Opposition to the Bill

This bill had been met with major backlash from those who use hemp-derived products and those who are employed by the industry. According to the Tampa Bay Times, "The governor's office has logged more than 13,000 phone calls, letters, and emails from groups and individuals pushing for a veto. Fewer than 100 people have reached out in support of the legislation." The governor's office provided this information.

Despite the prejudice around hemp-derived products, many use the substance as a natural alternative to treat illnesses such as epilepsy, anxiety, and depression. Without these products, they would have to turn to expensive, potentially addictive narcotics.

Another group that would have been hurt by this bill is those working in the hemp industry. In a report done by Save Florida Hemp, they report more than 100,000 people are employed in Florida's hemp industry. That's thousands of Florida residents who would be left with no job and no source of income.

Desantis's Stance on Hemp and Cannabis

It has been confirmed that recreational cannabis will be on the ballot due to citizen activism. Florida Governor, Ron Desantis, has been a long-time opposer of cannabis in Florida. In a recent press conference, he stated that if the bill were enacted, it would mean "this state will start to smell like marijuana in our cities and towns", and, "will reduce the quality of life."

As speculated, Desantis, due to his strong distaste for cannabis, vetoed the bill on June 7th to keep those using Delta-8 and Delta-9 happy and hopefully be less motivated to vote in favor of recreational cannabis. If he were to pass SB 1698, many would turn to vote for the new law, to replace what was taken from them.

Late last month, CBS News Miami released information regarding Desantis's stance on the bill. It states, "Late last week, DeSantis' chief of staff, James Uthmeier, called the sponsor of the hemp bill, Senator Colleen Burton, to inform her the governor was going to veto the bill."

On June 7th, Desantis released a statement along with his veto. "The bill would, in fact, impose debilitating regulatory burdens on small businesses and almost certainly fail to achieve its



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purposes,” DeSantis wrote. “Senate Bill 1698 would introduce dramatic disruption and harm to many small retail and manufacturing businesses in Florida.”

He goes on to say that they should write a similar measure next legislative session, however with input from relevant stakeholders.

“Sensible, non-arbitrary regulation will provide businesses and consumers alike with much-needed stability — safeguarding public health and safety, allowing legitimate industry to flourish, and removing bad actors from the market,” DeSantis wrote.

He ends with his recommendations to focus on quality control, labeling, marketing, packaging, and retail sale, rather than these “arbitrary” regulations. These measures would help execute the same values the original bill proposed without hindering businesses or ending an entire industry.

Recreational Cannabis

While there is speculation that Desantis is vetoing the bill to dissuade people from voting for recreational cannabis, this is unlikely to change people's minds. In a poll done by the Florida Chamber of Commerce, 58% of Floridians support legalizing recreational cannabis. However, to pass it must reach a 60% threshold. However, 5% of voters are undecided, meaning that they could potentially move to support cannabis.

If this law were to pass, it would allow companies such as Trulieve, who donated \$9.225 million to the campaign, to sell cannabis to all adults over 21.

Adults over 21 would be able to purchase and possess up to one ounce of cannabis. However, only 5 grams would be allowed to be concentrate products. This document does not mention expungement or relief to those with cannabis convictions.

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