

Scutari Offers a New Legislative Approach - *NJ Cannabis Blog*

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Until now, New Jersey's strategy for marijuana legalization has been to address medical marijuana separately from recreational marijuana. Thus, as we have previously reported, Governor Murphy and the Department of Health have been working to rapidly expand the medical program, while the Legislature separately hashes out legislation on full legalization.

Now, a new approach has emerged. Senator Scutari, a legislative leader in the legalization movement, has introduced the "New Jersey Marijuana Legalization Act," which will tackle both medical and recreational marijuana in one broad swoop. Senate President Steve Sweeney is also a prime sponsor of the bill.

While the bill (S2703) is not yet posted on the Legislature's website, NJ Advance Media reports that Scutari's bill will call for a total of 218 marijuana dispensaries in New Jersey. Of those, 120 will be recreational dispensaries and 98 will be medical dispensaries. The bill will supposedly also allow a dispensary to create a "retain marijuana consumption area" on-site.

What the bill does not contain, however, are the social justice provisions that organizations like the ACLU of New Jersey want, such as automatic expungements and community reinvestment. That may lead to a delay in passing the bill.

We will post additional updates once the bill is posted.

Pashman Stein Walder Hayden is carefully monitoring developments in New Jersey and federally with respect to marijuana legislation and will be available to help its clients navigate the sure-to-be complex regulatory framework of this potential business frontier.

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