

Testimony underway in the trial of Derek Chauvin, the former police officer accused of killing George Floyd

New York governor signs bill legalizing recreational marijuana for adults 21 and older

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New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said he signed a bill that legalizes recreational marijuana.

(CNN) — New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Wednesday signed a [bill allowing recreational marijuana use](#) by adults 21 and older after the state Senate and Assembly voted to approve the legislation.

[Senate Bill S854A](#) passed the Senate, with 40 voting in favor and 23 against. It then went to the Assembly, which approved it with 100 votes in favor and 49 votes against it during a late-night session Tuesday.

The bill also expunges previous marijuana convictions for actions that would be legal under the new law.

"This is a historic day in New York -- one that rights the wrongs of the past by putting an end to harsh prison sentences, embraces an industry that will grow the Empire State's economy, and prioritizes marginalized communities so those that have suffered the most will be the first to reap the benefits," Cuomo said in a news release Wednesday.

"This was one of my top priorities in this year's State of the State agenda and I'm proud these comprehensive reforms address and balance the social equity, safety and economic impacts of legal adult-use cannabis," Cuomo said.



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It also allows adults 21 and older to buy cannabis from authorized sellers, and possess up to 3 ounces of cannabis and 24 grams of cannabis concentrate. And, 18 months after sales first begin, it allows them to grow at home up to six mature plants and six immature plants at home per household.

State Sen. Liz Krueger, the bill's sponsor in the Senate, spoke passionately Tuesday evening about the racial inequities of drug enforcement, and the "injustice" of marijuana prohibition "for young people, whose lives were being destroyed, for doing something I did when I was a kid."

In a news release ahead of the bill's anticipated passing, the bill's Assembly sponsor Majority Leader Crystal D. Peoples-

Stokes said she was "proud" to see the bill pass after so many years of effort.

"We are providing marijuana justice by ensuring investment into the lives and communities of those who suffered for generations as a result of mass incarceration," Peoples-Stokes said.

Financial impact

Cuomo's office previously said the development of an adult-use cannabis industry in New York has the potential to create 30,000 to 60,000 jobs and the ability to earn \$350 million annually in tax collections.

The New York State Cannabis/Marijuana Regulation & Taxation Act would add a 13% tax to retail sales for state and local tax revenue, a release from earlier this week said.



J. TORRES/NEW JERSEY GOVERNOR'S OFFICE/AP

The taxes would go to the New York state cannabis revenue fund, with the remainder after costs being split between education (40%), the Community Grants Reinvestment Fund (40%) and the Drug Treatment and Public Education Fund (20%).

"Cities, towns, and villages may opt-out of allowing adult-use cannabis retail dispensaries or on-site consumption licenses by passing a local law by December 31, 2021 or nine months after the effective date of the legislation. They cannot opt-out of adult-use legalization," the release said.

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CNN's Jason Hanna and Lauren del Valle contributed to this report.

