



with his current vision being more progressive than any candidate in history. Prior to running for president, Sanders was introducing medical marijuana legislation in the U.S. House. In 2015, he filed the first-ever Senate bill to end the federal prohibition on cannabis. A year later, he became the first major presidential candidate to come out in support of marijuana legalization.

Now, his stance includes expunging all marijuana-related convictions and ensuring that communities most affected by what he calls “ridiculous” marijuana laws will be the ones to benefit from its legalization. Should he become the Democratic nominee and win the presidency in November, Sanders vows to sign an executive order to legalize marijuana in his first 100 days in the White House.

Republican Party

Donald J. Trump

Trump once advocated the legalization of marijuana years before he became president. After nearly four years in office, however, Trump’s stance on marijuana and legalization has been fairly conservative. With a Republican majority in his first two years in office, marijuana remained a Schedule 1 controlled substance. Democrats regained control of the House in 2018 and have passed numerous cannabis reform bills, including a legalization bill that would remove it from Schedule 1; all sit untouched in Mitch McConnell’s Republican Senate.

Though the Trump administration has mostly maintained that it would let

the states decide the fate of legalization, Trump has since veered in his most recent budget proposal, slashing state medical cannabis protections. This isn’t the first time Trump has tried to remove these protections, however. Congress has been in agreement on its necessity and is likely to reintroduce them for Senate approval again.

Bill Weld

Unbeknownst to many, Trump has a competitor in the Republican primary. Bill Weld, a former two-term governor of Massachusetts, calls himself as a traditional Republican. He served as assistant counsel during Watergate and assistant U.S. Attorney General for the criminal division under President Ronald Reagan. Weld has also been at the forefront of social issues in Massachusetts, including LGBTQ+ rights.

He has supported the legalization of medical marijuana since 1992 and aided the effort to legalize recreational cannabis use in Massachusetts in 2016. It states on his campaign site that Weld favors immediate descheduling of cannabis as a Schedule 1 narcotic and cites research in Israel that proves that cannabis can have positive outcomes on diseases including Parkinson’s, cancer and multiple sclerosis. □



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