



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **HOWE APPROVES PETITION FORMAT FOR STATUTORY MEASURE RELATING TO LEGALIZATION OF CANNABIS AND RELATED REGULATION**

**BISMARCK, ND** – North Dakota Secretary of State Michael Howe has approved the format of a petition to initiate a statutory measure on the ballot related to legalization of cannabis and related regulation. Proponents now have until April 25, 2025, one year after notice of approval, to collect signatures and submit them to the Office of the Secretary of State for review.

The proposed statutory initiative title is as follows:

*The initiated measure would create a new chapter of the North Dakota Century Code. It would allow for the production, processing, and sale of cannabis and the possession and use of various forms of cannabis by individuals who are 21 years of age and older; direct a state entity to regulate and register adult use cannabis production businesses, dispensaries, and their agents; provide protections for individuals who are 21 years of age or older who use cannabis; provide penalties for violations of the chapter; preserve certain employer rights regarding use of cannabis products by employees; supersede local ordinances that otherwise would prohibit the purchase, sale, use, delivery, or growing of cannabis by or to individuals 21 years of age or older; and provide that fees must be appropriated for administration of this chapter.*

The Office of the Secretary of State informed proponents on April 25, 2024, that they have:

- One year to circulate petitions and collect signatures from constituents in North Dakota (N.D.C.C. § 16.1-01-09(7)); and
- To submit no fewer than 15,582 valid signatures in order to be deemed sufficient to be placed on the ballot.
  - If signatures are submitted before midnight on July 8, 2024, the measure will be placed on the ballot for the November 5, 2024, general election.
  - If signatures are submitted after July 8, 2024, the measure will be placed on the next statewide election.

To place a statutory initiative on the ballot, a Sponsoring Committee must submit petitions containing the valid signatures of qualified North Dakota electors equal to at least 2% of the resident population of North Dakota. The state's population is determined by the federal census in effect and certified at the time the petitions are submitted.

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*The Office of Secretary of State oversees a variety of functions, including elections, business registrations, licensing for certain occupations, Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) lien filings, and combative sports, as well as serving as the custodian of the Great Seal, and attesting official documents and acts of the Governor.*