

Medical Marijuana and Cannabidiol Research Expansion Act (H.R.8454)

- This bill establishes a new, separate registration process to facilitate research on marijuana.
- Directs the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to follow specified procedures to register (1) practitioners to conduct marijuana research, and (2) manufacturers to supply marijuana for the research.
- Expedites the process to request an increase in the quantity of Schedule I substances for approved research and changes in protocol. Those seeking to increase the quantity of drug being used would be required to notify the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), rather than DEA and FDA.
- Allows certain registered entities (including institutions of higher education, practitioners, and manufacturers) to manufacture, distribute, dispense, or possess marijuana or cannabidiol (CBD) for the purposes of medical research. Additionally, the bill directs the DEA to register manufacturers and distributors of CBD or marijuana for the purpose of commercial production of an approved drug that contains marijuana or its derivative.
- Streamlines the development of FDA-approved drugs using CBD and marijuana by allowing accredited medical and osteopathic schools, practitioners, research institutions and manufacturers with a Schedule I registration to manufacture marijuana for their research.
- The bill includes various other provisions, including provisions that:
 - require the DEA to assess whether there is an adequate and uninterrupted supply of marijuana for research purposes;
 - prohibit the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) from reinstating the interdisciplinary review process for marijuana research;
 - allow physicians to discuss the potential harms and benefits of marijuana and its derivatives (including CBD) with patients; and
 - require HHS, in coordination with the National Institutes of Health and relevant federal agencies, to report on the therapeutic potential of marijuana for various conditions such as epilepsy, as well as the impact on adolescent brains and on the ability to operate a motor vehicle.
- Despite lowering barriers to research, the bill **does not alter legal status of marijuana or change schedule.**



Why do we need this bill: This bill demonstrates how we can expand research opportunities without legalizing marijuana. We need more data on the negative impact that marijuana has on the brain. This bill will facilitate that research in the United States. This legislation will allow a wider range of researchers to access marijuana. Researchers will also be able to access licensing allowing them to research marijuana more quickly.

This bill also leaves no room for legalization advocates to claim that we need to legalize marijuana in order to research it.

Pathway to law: H.R.8454 was passed by the House of Representatives by a 325-90 in July and passed the Senate by unanimous consent in November. The bill will be sent to President Biden's desk where he is expected to sign it into law.