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National Marijuana Legislation At Fork In The Legislative Road

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Submitted by Edgar on Thu, 01/31/2019 - 12:00am

The dream of marijuana advocates is that Congress will pass a marijuana bill that will make pot instantly legal throughout America. But even though the midterm elections brought more people to Congress who support marijuana reform, it looks like that dream may have to wait.

In the meantime, several bills have been filed in the new Democrat-controlled House of Representatives that take different approaches to the issue. The most important differences concern how these bills handle the Controlled Substances Act, which classifies marijuana as similar to heroin and cocaine.

Just like its name implies, HB 420 – the “Regulate Marijuana Like Alcohol Act” – would regulate marijuana just like alcohol is across the country. The second bill, “Strengthening the Tenth Amendment Through Entrusting States (STATES) Act,” would not. A third bill, the “Compassionate Access, Research Expansion, and Respect States Act (“CARERS Act”) would essentially nullify application of the Controlled Substances Act as to medical marijuana in compliance with state law. The CARERS Act also would authorize physicians at the Department of Veterans Affairs to recommend medical marijuana to veterans who live in states with medical marijuana programs.

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