



April 17, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Democratic Leader
United States House of Representatives
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Brian Patrick Kennedy
Speaker Pro Tempore
Rhode Island General
Assembly
President, NCSL

Sabrina N. Lewellen
Deputy Director - Senate
Assistant Secretary of the
Senate
Arkansas General Assembly
Staff Chair, NCSL

Tim Storey
Chief Executive Officer
NCSL

RE: NCSL Supports the SAFER Banking Act

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Majority Leader Schumer, and Leader McConnell:

I am writing on behalf of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the bipartisan organization representing the legislatures of our nation's states, territories and commonwealths, to reiterate our support for the Secure and Fair Enforcement Regulation (SAFER) Banking Act. We urge Congress to act quickly to attach the SAFER Banking Act to the FAA reauthorization and pass the measure.

The inability of legal state cannabis businesses to receive financial services from the federal banking system creates an unsafe position for these legal entities, as well as taxation and compliance problems for states that have exercised their authority to legalize cannabis. The SAFER Banking Act would provide much-needed banking resources to these legitimate businesses and help facilitate secure, simpler and more enforceable business activity in nearly every state.

Currently, 47 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands have passed some sort of cannabis legalization. Yet, legitimate business owners must continue to rely on cash-only cannabis transactions. This exchange increases the real risk that they, their employees and customers become prime targets for theft, burglary, armed robbery and other crimes that jeopardize the safety of person and property, as well as endanger the greater communities where your constituents live and work and these businesses operate.

Cannabis will remain illegal under the SAFER Banking Act, and we strongly believe that supporting this legislation is not akin to endorsing its legalization under federal or state law. Instead, support for this act would help to resolve the long-standing tension between federal and state law with respect to banking and other financial services by allowing financial institutions to provide services to these legal businesses without penalty. The legislation would help reduce threats to public safety, enable better monitoring of the financial activity and enforcement of legal cannabis businesses, and demonstrate respect for state authority to legislate in this area.

NCSL stands ready to provide further information regarding the impact of the SAFER Banking Act on states and we look forward to working with your offices to pass this important and impactful legislation.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact NCSL Legislative Director Barrie Tabin at Barrie.Tabin@ncsl.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tim Storey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Tim Storey
Chief Executive Officer
National Conference of State Legislatures