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ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN, 18 ATTORNEYS GENERAL CALL FOR BANKING LEGISLATION FOR LEGALIZED USE OF MARIJUANA

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today joined a coalition of 19 attorneys general urging Congress to advance legislation that would allow states with legalized medical or recreational marijuana to participate in the banking system. Banks and other depository institutions are currently hindered by federal law from providing financial services to marijuana businesses, even in states where those businesses are regulated.

The [letter](#), sent to Congressional leaders, calls for legislation that would provide a legal "safe harbor" for depository institutions that provide financial services to covered businesses in a state that regulates its marijuana industry.

"Twenty-nine states and several U.S. territories have legalized the medical use of marijuana. Among those, eight states and the District of Columbia also allow recreational use by adults over 21 years of age. However, because the federal government classifies marijuana as an illegal substance, banks providing services to state-licensed cannabis businesses could find themselves subject to criminal and civil liability under the Controlled Substances Act and certain federal banking statutes," the letter states.

Madigan and the attorneys general also noted a recent decision by the U.S. Department of Justice to rescind guidance outlining how financial institutions can provide services to state-licensed marijuana businesses consistent with federal law. That rescission, the attorneys general argued, has made the need for congressional action even more important to move this industry into a regulated banking sector.

The attorneys general said that legislation in this area would protect public safety by bringing these financial activities into the banking sector and subjecting the industry to law enforcement monitoring.

Joining Attorney General Madigan in signing today's letter were the attorneys general from: Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Guam, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Washington.

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