

North Carolina Advisory Council on Cannabis

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State Health Director & Chief Medical Officer, NCDHHS

Matt Scott

District Attorney, Prosecutorial District 20

Wednesday, July 29, 2026



Welcome

Welcome

- Roll Call
- Public Records, Ethics Awareness and Conflict of Interest Reminder
- Approval of May 2026 Minutes

Roll Call

**Public Records,
Ethics Awareness, and
Conflict of Interest Reminder**

Public Records, Ethics Awareness & Conflict of Interest

Under North Carolina law, “public records and public information compiled by the agencies of North Carolina government or its subdivisions are the property of the people.” N.C. Gen. Stat. § 132-1(b).

- Providing access to government records in accordance with state law is an important part of the everyday duties of office holders, government employees, and appointed and elected members of government boards and commissions.
- The Public Records Act defines public records broadly to include any document that is related to public business.
- Records related to public business that are created or transmitted through non-governmental accounts may nevertheless be public records. Thus, public business conducted using text messages from a Council member’s personal mobile phone or emails from a personal email account may be public records.
- The Governor’s Office General Counsel team provides training on public records for Council members.

Public Records, Ethics Awareness & Conflict of Interest Cont.

In accordance with the State Government Ethics Act, it is the duty of every Council member to avoid both conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest.

If any Council member has any known conflict of interest or is aware of facts that might create the appearance of such conflict, with respect to any matters coming before the Council today, please identify the conflict or the facts that might create the appearance of a conflict to ensure that any inappropriate participation in that matter may be avoided.

If at any time, any new matter raises a conflict during the meeting, please be sure to identify it at that time.

Approval of May 2026 Minutes

Agenda

- Presentations:

Public Safety Subcommittee

Lt. Colonel Chuck Gould, Deputy Commander, NC Highway Patrol
Sheriff Keith Stone, NC Sheriffs' Association

Alcohol Law Enforcement: Landscape Update and Quantitative Testing

Josh Batten, Assistant Director of Special Services, ALE
Scottie Shoaf, Assistant Director of Special Services, ALE

Unregulated, Unsafe and Illegal—The Reality of Smoke Shops

Kevin Steele, District Attorney, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

North Carolina State Crime Lab

Amanda Thompson, Director, NC Crime Lab
Liz Patel, Assistant Director of Technical Operations, NC Crime Lab
Amanda Venable, Forensic Scientist Manager, NC Crime Lab

- Phase Two Subcommittees
- Next Steps

Public Safety Subcommittee

**Lt. Colonel Chuck Gould,
Deputy Commander, NC Highway Patrol**

**Sheriff Keith Stone, Nash County,
NC Sheriffs' Association**



Alcohol Law Enforcement
NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Tobacco and Vape Shops: Landscape Update and Quantitative Testing

Law Enforcement Perspective



Types of Products Still Being Sold in Vape/Tobacco Shops



- Tobacco (nicotine) products
- Hemp/THC/CBD products (Flower, Gummies, Vapes, Beverages)
- Kratom
- Whippets, CO2 Products
- Drug Paraphernalia
- Urine Adulterant
- Stash Cans
- Prescription medicine (mostly imported)
- WEAPONS

****No Age Requirement for ANY Product
above other than Tobacco****



Recent Products Observed





Law Enforcement Obstacles

Oversight of a Nonregulated Industry

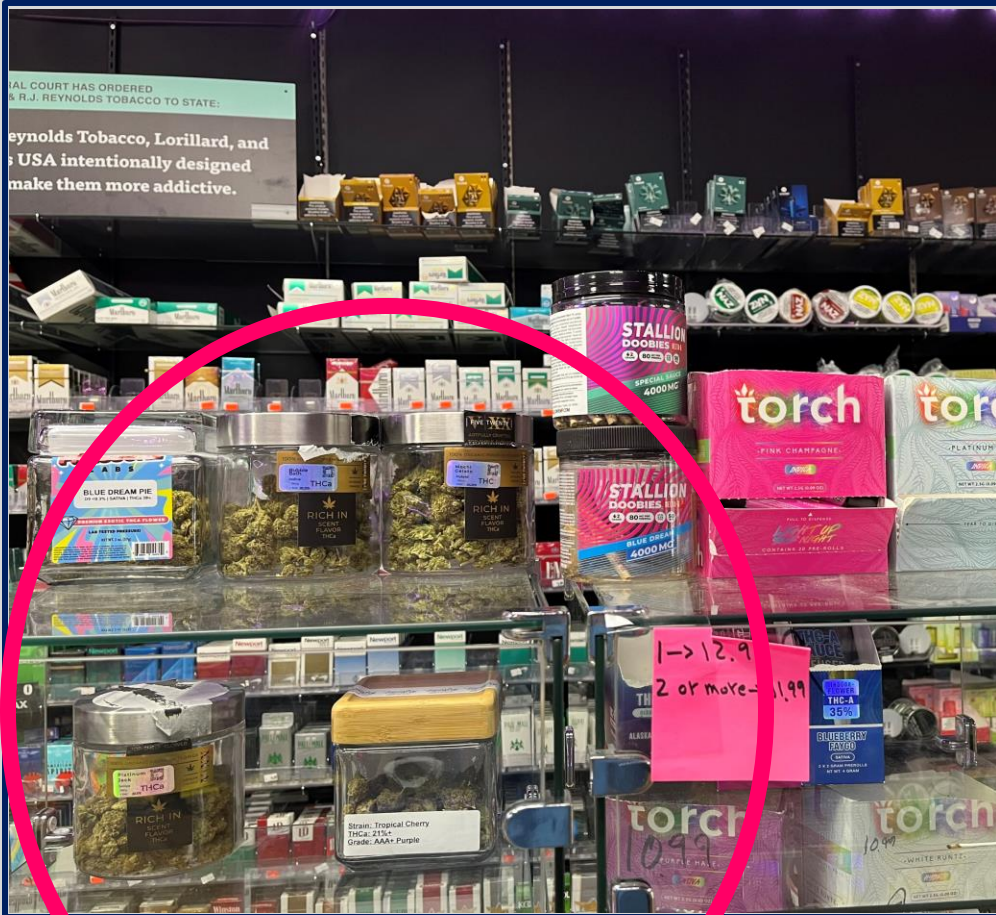
- No licensing requirement
- One of only 8 states that have no retail licensing requirement for “tobacco” locations
- Unknown locations
 - No reliable database that identifies locations or ownership
 - Previous estimate of approximately 5,000 - 7,000 unpermitted locations statewide that identify as “tobacco” or “vape” shops and sell products containing THC is steady increasing.

Law Enforcement Obstacles

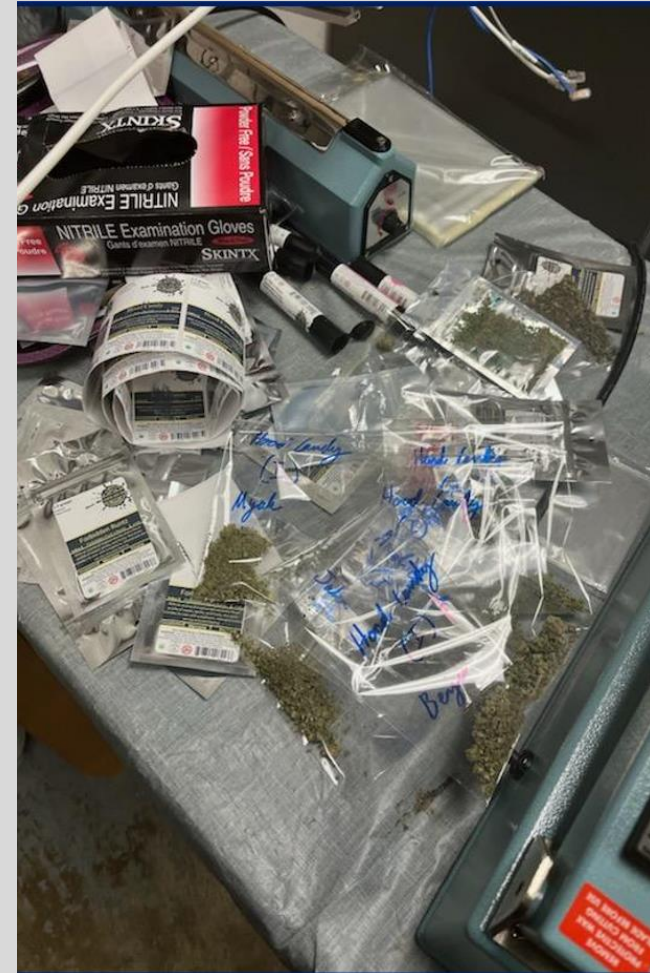


- No legal right for ANY law enforcement to enter or inspect; same rights as the general public
- Impossible to distinguish between legal and non-legal products regarding THC content
- Need for undercover purchase and testing
- Search Warrant requirement
- Cost of Testing
- For ALE specifically, limited manpower vs complaints received

Products Recently Seized



Investigation Example



Latest Trend: Rise in THC Beverages



- Many cannabis-infused drinks list THC as an ingredient
- No Standard Dose but most contain between 5 and 20 milligrams (some up to 200).
- No Standard on “serving size” which provides confusion and danger for consumer
- Cannabinoids found in beverages are specially formulated to dissolve in liquid. This means they are more easily and rapidly absorbed into the body's soft tissues.

THC Drinks





New Testing Tool LightLab 3 Cannabis Analyzer

Things That Can Be Tested



LightLab 3 Law Enforcement Cannabis Analyzer

LightLab 3 Product Types | Analysis Modes



Plant/Flower
(Wet or Dry)



Concentrate



Hemp Compliance



Tinctures



Edibles



Isolate

Presumptive Mode Data



Presumptive Mode



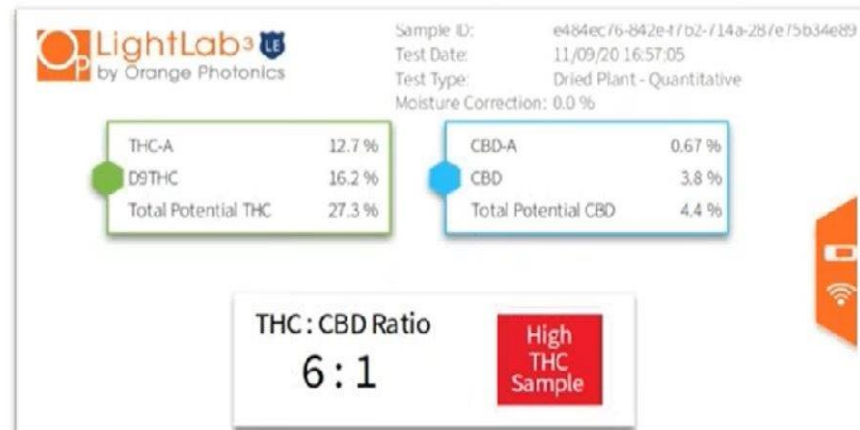
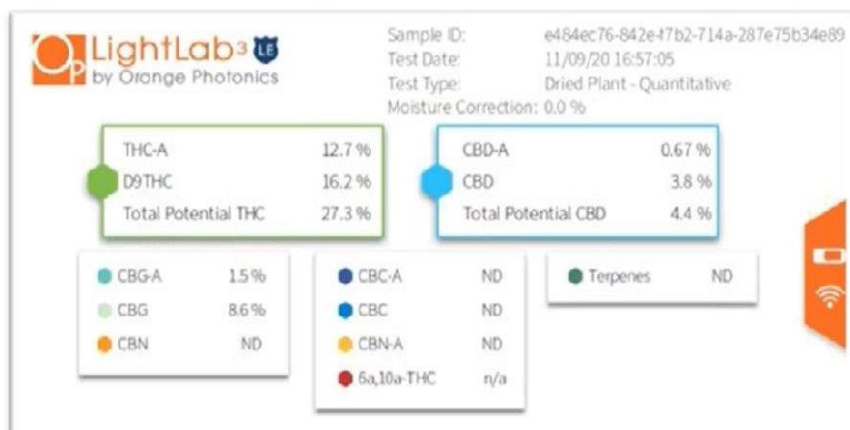
- Determines if a sample is High THC or High CBD
- Faster, simpler sample preparation
- Uses cannabinoid ratios for accuracy with difficult samples
 - Edibles
 - Concentrates
 - Wet Plant Material
- Still generates chromatographic evidence

Quantitative Mode for Raw Data



Quantitative Mode

- Lab-grade quantitative results on up to 11 cannabinoids
- Sample prep still field ready
- Also provides presumptive determination



LightLab 3 Testing



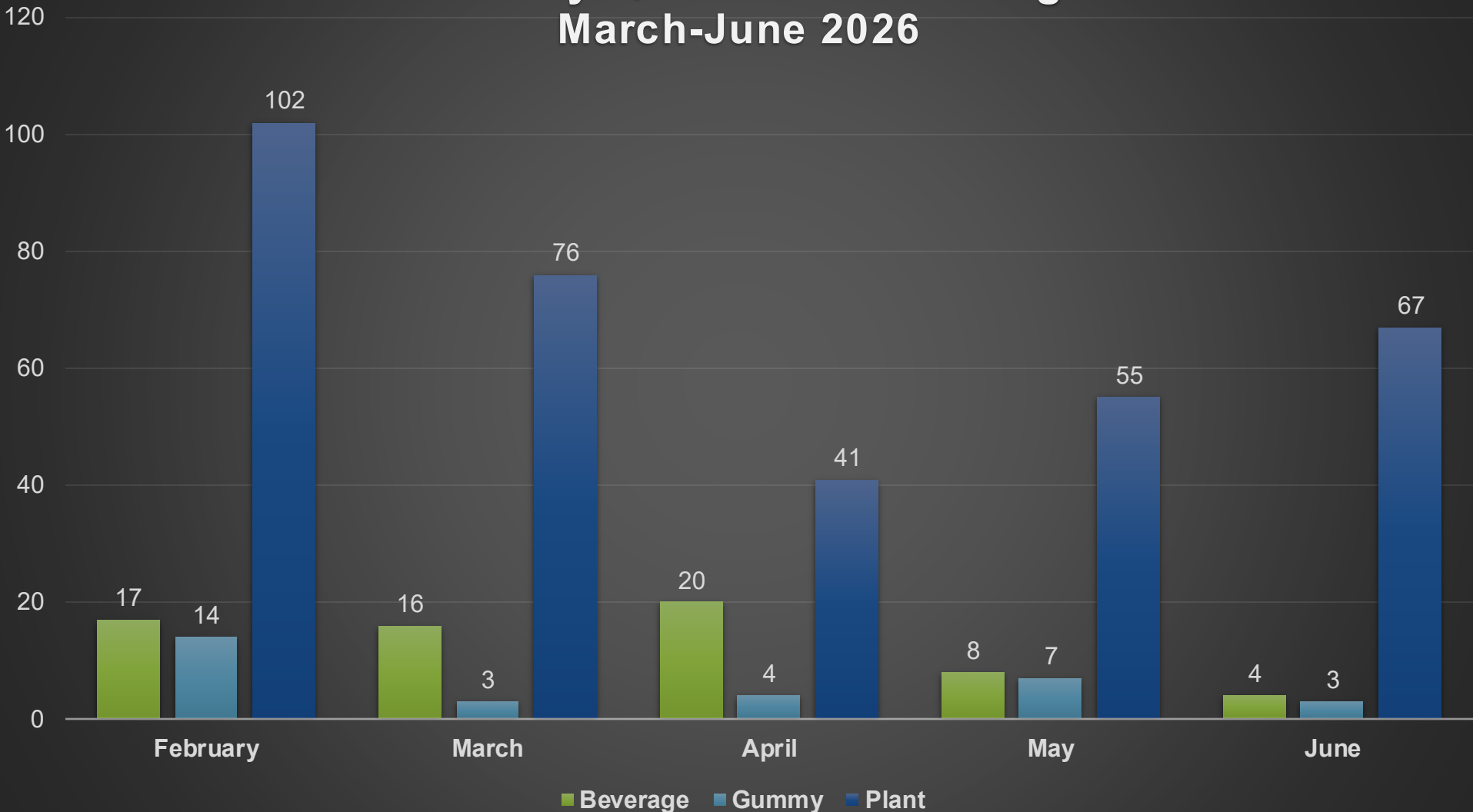
Sample Types Include:

- Plant Material
 - Flower
 - Vape Cartridges
 - Isolate
 - Edibles
 - Beverages
 - Infused Products
- **SAMPLE COMPLEXITY:** Plant extracts, edibles, and varying isofluids cause matrix interferences that require extraction of protocols before it can generate results.
 - Takes 8-9 minutes to analyze the data.
 - Generally, it takes 12 minutes to conduct a test.

Monthly Quantitative Testing



Monthly Quantitative Testing March-June 2026



LightLab3 Results from 2026



- ALE completed 457 sample tests utilizing LightLab from February 1, 2026-present.
- 362 of those samples tested above .3% Delta-9 THC
- 74 of those sample tested above .3% Delta-8 THC
- Only 21 tests came back under the legal limit

Testing Results (FY2026-current)



- January 2026-current, ALE seized and submitted 341 samples with (94%) testing above .3% Delta-9 THC
- In FY 24-25, ALE seized and submitted 293 samples for testing with (92%) testing above .3% Delta-9 THC
- 94% tested would be defined as Marijuana
- Percentages ranged up to 63.74% Delta-9 THC

Current Law Enforcement Testing



- Purchasing/Receiving products from inside Vape stores through undercover.
- Testing the products with on-site LightLab 3 resources.
- Seizing products and sending them off for official test results through a certified lab.



COA Example



kca
labs

KCA Laboratories
232 North Plaza Drive
Nicholasville, KY 40356

+1-833-KCA-LABS
https://kcalabs.com
KDA Lic.# P_0058

Certificate of Analysis

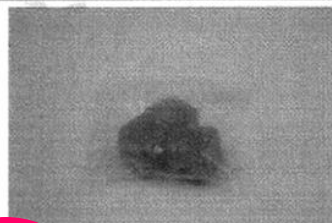
1 of 1

10 mg d9/ 15 mg CBD

Sample ID: SA-250428-60974
Batch: 4/285/2025
Type: Finished Product - Ingestible
Matrix: Edible - Gummy
Unit Mass (g): 3.34026

Received: 05/01/2025
Completed: 05/08/2025

Client
D.E.L. Hemp
8241 Harrell Store Rd
Kenly, NC 27542
USA
Lic. #: USDA-37-0235



Summary

Test	Date Tested	Status
Cannabinoids	05/08/2025	Tested

0.275 %
Total Δ9-THC

0.485 %
CBD

0.771 %
Total Cannabinoids

Not Tested
Moisture Content

Not Tested
Foreign Matter

Yes
Internal Standard
Normalization

Cannabinoids by HPLC-PDA

Analyte	LOD (%)	LOQ (%)	Result (%)	Result (mg/unit)
CBC	0.00095	0.00284	ND	ND
CBCA	0.00181	0.00543	ND	ND
CBV	0.0006	0.0018	ND	ND
CBD	0.00081	0.00242	0.485	16.2
CBDA	0.00043	0.0013	ND	ND
CBDV	0.00061	0.00182	0.00454	0.152
CBDA	0.00021	0.00063	ND	ND
CBG	0.00057	0.00172	0.00258	0.0862
CBGA	0.00049	0.00147	ND	ND
CBL	0.00112	0.00335	ND	ND
CBLA	0.00124	0.00371	ND	ND
CBN	0.00056	0.00169	<LOQ	<LOQ
CBNA	0.0006	0.00181	ND	ND
CBT	0.0018	0.0054	ND	ND
Δ8-THC	0.00104	0.00312	0.00432	0.144
Δ9-THC	0.00076	0.00227	0.275	9.17
Δ9-THCA	0.00084	0.00251	ND	ND
Δ9-THCV	0.00069	0.00206	<LOQ	<LOQ
Δ9-THCVA	0.00062	0.00186	ND	ND
Total Δ9-THC			0.275	9.17
Total			0.771	25.7

ND = Not Detected; NT = Not Tested; LOD = Limit of Detection; LOQ = Limit of Quantitation; RL = Reporting Limit; Δ = Delta; Total Δ9-THC = Δ9-THCA + Δ9-THC; Total CBD = CBDA + CBD; CBG = CBC + CBGA + CBL + CBLA + CBN + CBNA + CBT



Alcohol Law Enforcement
NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Discussion

“Unregulated, Unsafe and Illegal— The Reality of Smoke Shops”

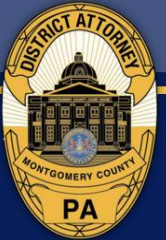
The Montgomery County
Investigative Grand Jury Report





10-month Montgomery County Grand Jury Investigation
January 29, 2025, to October 29, 2025

Results Announced October 30, 2025



The Philadelphia Inquirer

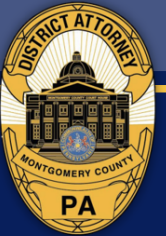
Smoke shops outnumber schools: Grand jury probe blasts unregulated hemp market across suburbs

A grand jury probe involving Montgomery, Bucks and Chester counties found smoke shops use “misleading packaging and fraudulent lab reports” to openly sell banned substances — sometimes to children.



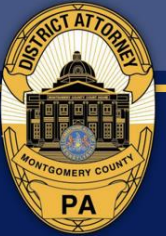
MEDIA COVERAGE

Major media hits across
print, video, radio and
social media



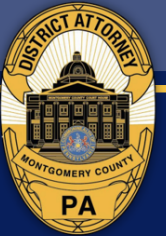
ISSUES THAT LAUNCHED GRAND JURY INVESTIGATION

- Proliferation of Smoke Shops since Passage of Farm Bills
- Sheer prevalence of these shops in our communities—240+ Smoke Shops currently in Montgomery County
- Reports from community and schools about students having THC products and vapes



ISSUES THAT LAUNCHED GRAND JURY INVESTIGATION

- Initially, believed we were investigating Delta-8 and Delta-10 but when NET started to make undercover buys, it became clear that Smoke Shops were selling illegal marijuana with Delta-9 THC far above the .3%



EVIDENCE & TESTIMONY

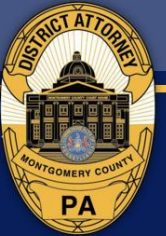
Grand Jury heard 10-months of testimony from:

- physicians, psychiatrists and toxicologists;
- smoke shop owners and employees;
- numerous narcotics enforcement officers from Montgomery, Bucks and Chester Counties; and Pennsylvania State Police

SMOKE SHOP PRODUCT TESTING

- 144 products submitted for laboratory testing (primarily loose flower and THC vapes)
- **Labs used:** National Medical Services and Pennsylvania State Police Lab





RESULTS OF LAB TESTING

- **93.75%** were full-blown marijuana THC at 5% or higher
- Four products were within legal limit for Delta-9 THC (0.3% or lower) but contained Delta-8 THC
- Four products showed no detectable levels of THC

PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED

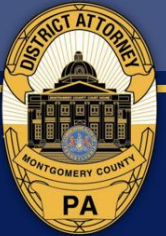
- Aggressive Marketing to Teens
 - ▶ No legal minimum age for THC purchases (means teens can buy gummies, flower and edibles without consequences for retailers)
- Health risks associated with THC
- High potency products – people are unaware of its potency



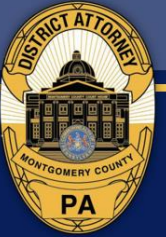
PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED

- Selling straight-up weed
 - ▶ Acting as neighborhood drug dealer
- Fraudulent lab reports



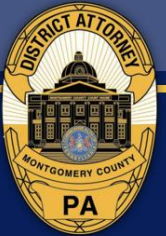


GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS



1. Protecting Children

- 21 years old to purchase THC products
- Electronic ID scanning
- Regulate how THC products can be marketed, especially resemble familiar non-THC products



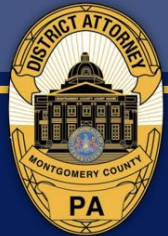
2. Legislative Action Needed

- Fix the Farm Bill
- Establish regulations for dosage, standardized serving sizes and potency, along with comprehensive labeling of THC products
- Require markings on all THC edibles
- Warning labels on THC product packaging



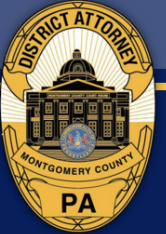
3. Regulate Smoke Shops

- Create a statewide licensing system; limit the number of smoke shops with defined geographic areas
- Training for store owners/employees
- Routine inspection and enforcement



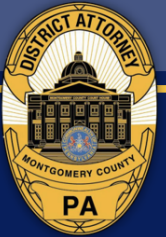
4. Ensuring Product Safety

- Mandatory, regular batch testing
- Centralized information system for retail oversight



5. Public Education/Awareness Campaign About Risks of Unregulated THC Products

- Health risks of marijuana
- Legal status and synthetic THC products
- Health risks associated with untested and mislabeled products



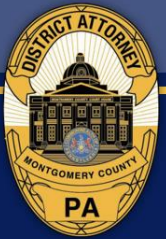
5. Public Education/Awareness Campaign (continued)

- Marketing tactics used to target youth and the importance of parental/community vigilance
- Difference between regulated medical marijuana and unregulated retail products

6. Investigation & Criminal Penalties for Distributors Illegally Selling Marijuana

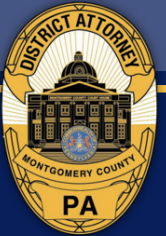
- Enforcement of distributors who are knowingly violating Pennsylvania law
- Consistent and visible enforcement





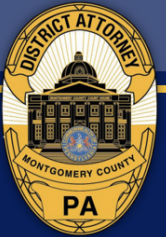
7. Pitfalls to Avoid

- Recommend against overtaxing THC products
- Adequately fund law enforcement with dedicated resources



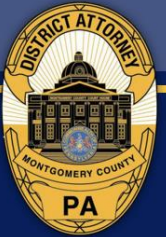
8. Legislation to Establish Civil Liability Laws

- Sellers should be held accountable when someone is harmed by a product that was mislabeled, untested or deceptively marketed or other negligence

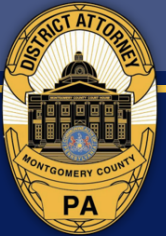


FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FIXES FARM BILL

- Included in bill to reopen federal government
- Passed Nov. 12, 2025; Effective in 365 days from date signed
- Addresses issues raised by Grand Jury Report
- Federal Farm Bill effectively prohibits the sale and/or distribution of all hemp products exceeding 0.4 mg of total THC per container

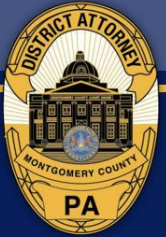


PENNSYLVANIA LEGISLATURE



Align Pennsylvania Law with the Updated Federal Farm Bill

- New federal law bans all forms of THC, not just Delta-9 THC, and sets clear limits on THC concentration per product
- Pennsylvania needs to clearly define and restrict marijuana derivatives—such as Delta-8, Delta-10 and THCA—to prevent suppliers from exploiting the law



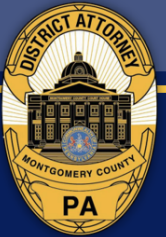
Legislated Strict Age Requirement of 21 for THC Purchases

- Unlike alcohol and nicotine, THC products have no minimum age
- Puts youth at risk



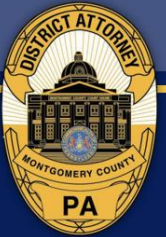
Require Accredited Lab Testing and Truthful Labeling

- Mandate all hemp products must be regularly tested by accredited laboratories
- Mandate accurate, transparent labeling to prevent fraudulent claims and shield retailers from liability



Establish Oversight Board for Smoke Shops

- Create statewide licensing system
- Require electronic ID scanning to safeguard children
- Require training for store owners and employees
- Conduct routine inspection and enforcement



EFFORTS FOLLOWING RELEASE OF GRAND JURY REPORT

DA Testified about Grand Jury Findings Before Center for Rural Pennsylvania



Hand-Delivered Grand Jury Reports to Each Legislator in November 2025 (Before)



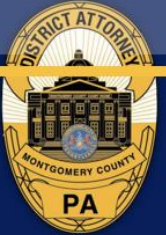
Hand-Delivered Grand Jury Reports to Each Legislator in November 2025 (After)





Law Enforcement

- Hand-delivered letters to each Smoke Shop in County putting them on notice about the law
- Ongoing undercover buys and testing
- Investigating illegal sales of marijuana and synthetic THC products



National Hemp Association

Chair Geoff Whaling
supports our efforts at
“cleaning up the industry”



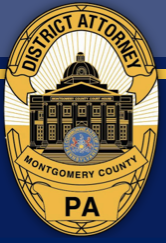
NHA
NATIONAL HEMP ASSOCIATION



Adolescent Cannabis Use and Risk of Psychotic, Bipolar, Depressive and Anxiety Disorders

Findings in this cohort study of 463,396 adolescents aged 13 to 17 years who were universally screened for cannabis use, past-year cannabis use was associated with a significantly increased risk of incident psychotic, bipolar, depressive, and anxiety disorders by age 26 years.

Study findings released Feb. 20, 2026



OPINION
THE EDITORIAL BOARD

It's Time for America to Admit That It Has a Marijuana Problem

Feb. 9, 2026

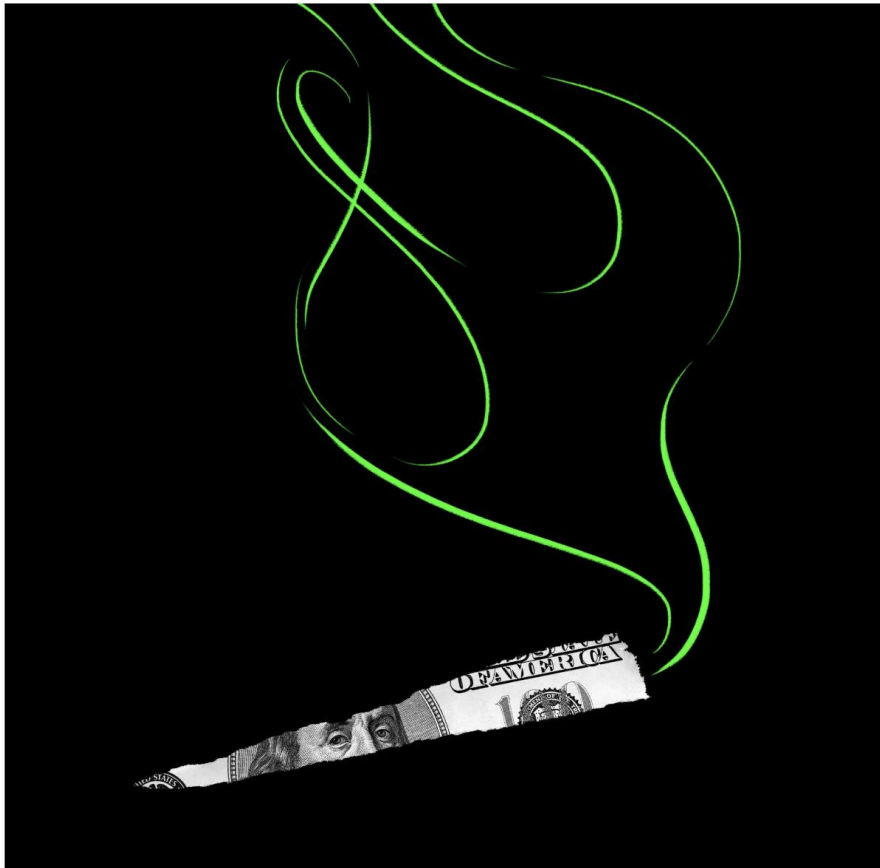
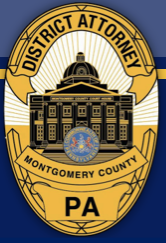


Illustration by Rebecca Chew/The New York Times

The New York Times



New York Times editorial board calls for guardrails for marijuana after backing legalization

The paper wrote that the U.S. has “gone too far” in normalizing usage of the drug.

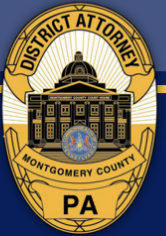


A marijuana plant grows in San Anselmo, California. The New York Times editorial board urged a new approach to regulating the drug, warning of adverse effects of legalization. | Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

By **JACOB WENDLER**

02/09/2026 05:59 PM EST





Suggestions for the Process

- Partner with Statewide District Attorneys Association to establish a unified approach toward the General Assembly and affecting legislative changes;
- Work with the Governor's Office and explore possibilities of assistance of cabinet-level agencies on addressing this issue;
- Explore whether Consumer Protection lawsuits would be appropriate;
- And change definition in Drug Act to align w/ Federal Farm Bill fix.

“Unregulated, Unsafe and Illegal— The Reality of Smoke Shops”

The Montgomery County
Investigative Grand Jury Report



Break

North Carolina State Crime Laboratory

Amanda Thompson, Director,
North Carolina State Crime Laboratory

Liz Patel, Assistant Director of Technical Operations,
North Carolina State Crime Laboratory

Amanda Venable, Forensic Scientist Manager,
North Carolina State Crime Laboratory

Phase Two Subcommittees

Market and Regulatory Structure

Public Safety

Revenue and Legal

Market and Regulatory Structure Subcommittee

Dan Hirschman, JD, Department of Environmental Quality, Co-Chair
Missy Welch, JD, Executive Director, ABC Commission, Co-Chair
Renee Metz, JD, ABC Commission, Lead Staff

Public Safety Subcommittee

Colonel Freddy Johnson, Commander, NC Highway Patrol, Co-Chair
Sheriff Keith Stone, NC Sheriff's Association, Co-Chair
MaryBryan Wolak, NCDPS, ALE Division, Lead Staff

Revenue and Legal Subcommittee

Anca Grosnov, OSBM, Co-Chair

Joy Strickland, JD, Senior Deputy Attorney General, Criminal Bureau
of the NC DOJ, Co-Chair

Next Steps

Thank You