

THE TOP 50 VOICES

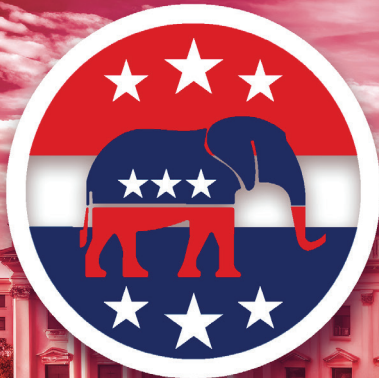


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InsiderNJ@gmail.com

InsiderNJ.com



Max Pizarro
Editor-in-Chief
Max@InsiderNJ.com



Pete Oneglia
General Manager
Pete@InsiderNJ.com



John Van Vliet
Director of Operations
JohnVV@InsiderNJ.com

Michael Graham
CEO

John F.X. Graham
Publisher

Ryan Graham
Associate Publisher



INTRODUCTION

As the devil lies in details, so too does the high abide in cannabis, or the precision of grammatical properties in laws prescribing its use.

To paraphrase Lincoln, the world will little note what New Jersey lawmakers said here on the floors of Trenton, but we will always forget what they did here, so long as a statewide cannabis fog prevails.

More to the point, however, is that people, in fact, don't forget the effects of an amendment to the state constitution struck on January 1, 2021, which enabled the legalization of cannabis in New Jersey, signed into law on Feb. 22 of that same year by Governor Phil Murphy.

Simply put, New Jersey's Cannabis

Regulatory, Enforcement Assistance, and Marketplace Modernization (CREAMM) Act "allows for the legal sale and use of cannabis and cannabis products for residents 21 years and older."

In each transaction, according to CREAMM, dispensaries are allowed to sell up to the equivalent of 28.35 grams or 1 ounce of usable cannabis.

That means up to:

- 28.35 grams (1 ounce) of dried flower
- 4 grams of solid cannabis concentrates or resin, or the equivalent of 4 grams of concentrate in liquid form (solution in milliliters)
- 4 grams of vaporized formulations (oil)

THE LEADING **TOP 50 VOICES** IN THE CANNABIS INDUSTRY

- 1000 mg of multiple ingestible cannabis-infused products (ten 100 mg packages) like gummies

So far, so good.

But, of course, that frontier surmounted didn't put to rest other legal debates, and other Trenton battles. Most significant perhaps in the last number of weeks, a significant group of cannabis license holders wrote a letter to the state legislature, demanding movement on the state's so-called "homegrow" front.

The gist is this:

- Licensed cannabis and ancillary businesses and organizations support the amendment to bills S1393/A846 to allow up to 100 square feet of mature cannabis plant grow canopy area Michael (Appendix A). This would allow patients and caretakers to have the ability to properly pheno-hunt and cultivate an amount that meets individual needs. Additionally, this change would mitigate the potential for exploiting the law through the cultivation of massive cannabis plants.

- We implore the legislature to bring S1393/A846 to the committee and consider medical home cultivation for a vote as soon as possible to minimize the ongoing impact on medical cannabis patients.

So far, state senate President Nick Scutari (D-22), the original prime legislative mover of cannabis legalization, has resisted these "homegrow" calls, but they persist. At some point, the debate will come to a head, maybe without the culture-changing drama of 2021, but – conceivably – with some significance.

We'll be watching, through the haze, but in the meantime, hope to provide clarity to that dedicated band of NJ hempsters, both the hip and the legally triumphantly tripped, in this, our 2025 list of InsiderNJ's top cannabis advocates, voices, and players.



Max Pizarro

Editor-in-Chief



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1. WILLIAM CARUSO

Attorney, Lobbyist for Archer Public Affairs

Maybe the most visible and consistently outspoken and articulate advocate and influencer for the cannabis industry, Caruso co-founded the New Jersey United for Marijuana Reform, a group that laid the groundwork for the legalization movement.



2. DIANNA HOUEYOU

Commission Chair, NJ Cannabis Regulatory Commission

Former senior policy advisor and associate counsel in the Murphy Administration, where she advised the governor on policy and legislative issues concerning criminal justice, military and veterans, community affairs, immigrants' rights, and expungement reform and cannabis legalization.



3. JOSEPH DECOTIIS

Managing Partner, DeCotiis Fitzpatrick Cole and Giblin

This imminently politically-connected legal heavyweight chairs the Government and Regulatory Affairs Practice Group, a leading role in promoting New Jersey's burgeoning cannabis industry.



Congratulations Regina Appolon, Kevin Hagan & Sam Weinstein.

Named to the Insider NJ Cannabis Power List



Regina Appolon



Sam Weinstein



Kevin Hagan



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4. MATT PLATKIN

Attorney General, the State of New Jersey

Ever the hands-on AG, Platkin took a controversial stand when he allowed police to consume cannabis as part of the cannabis legalization referendum implementation law, the Cannabis Regulatory, Enforcement, Assistance, and Marketplace Modernization Act (CREAMMA). Challenged, the AG successfully defended his position in a New Jersey Supreme Court case.



5. ANDREA RAIBLE

Co-founder of the NJ Home Grow Coalition

In an open letter to Senate President Nick Scutari (see below), who resists home cultivation, chief home grow advocate Raible and others wrote: *“We firmly support the immediate legalization of medical home cultivation for patients and caregivers. We also endorse additional legislation to be introduced that allows for the legalization of personal use home cultivation safely and equitably.”*

Raible added in a press release: *“Even with our growing industry there’s no hope of access to the clean, consistent, strain-specific medicine that I need for my epilepsy. Politicians are concerned with adult use profits while we are concerned with life threatening health conditions and facing prison for plants.”*



Congratulations to CJ Griffin on being named to the **Cannabis Power List**



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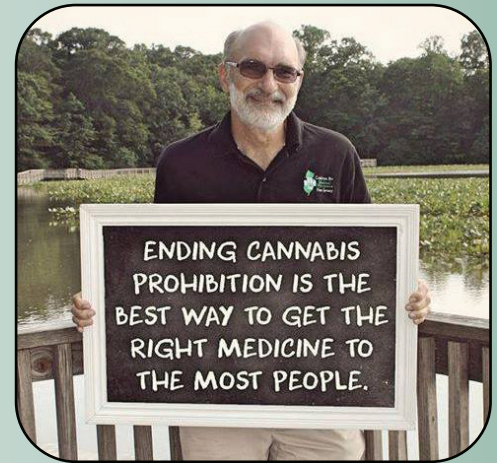
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*A description of the selection methodology can be found at <https://www.event.law.com/njlawjournal-njlegalawards/methodology>.
No aspect of this advertisement has been approved by the Supreme Court of New Jersey.

6. KEN WOLSKI

Activist

Trenton-based nurse and executive director of the Coalition for Medical Marijuana for New Jersey continues to serve as a respected voice within the cannabis community – and beyond.



7. NICK SCUTARI

Senate President

Veteran of the smoke-filled rooms of New Jersey's political classes, Scutari decided clouding the rest of the state was easier than fumigating that isolated area that was never going to be purged - let alone transparent. The senate stalwart stared down fellow lawmakers resistant to cannabis legalization and continues to consider the fine points of the industry he helped plant here: like the demands of the New Jersey Home Grow Coalition, who want him to post home grow legislation in the senate.



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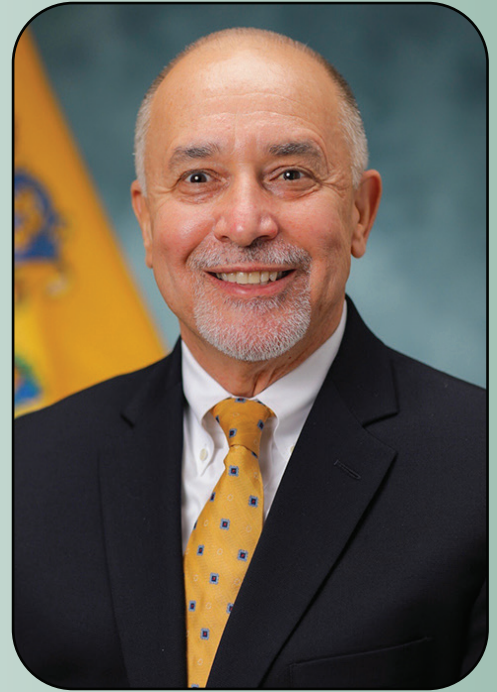
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8. SAM DELGADO

Commission Vice Chair, NJ Cannabis Regulatory Commission

Twenty years of experience in the United States Marine Corps. Perth Amboy-based. Married to Assemblywoman Yvonne Lopez. People rely on Delgado's competence and problem-solving skills. This, from Speaker Craig Coughlin (D-19): "Sam Delgado's professional and military service is outstanding and I strongly believe he is the best person I could select to serve on the Cannabis Regulatory Commission. Sam is an expert in the fields of community leadership, business management, strategic planning, supplier diversity and regulatory policy. He will bring these talents to the Commission and is a valued addition."



9. KEVIN HAGAN

Princeton Public Affairs Group

Former Chief-of-Staff to Steve Sweeney, ultimate Trenton insider/lobbyist Hagan, in the interest of public consumer safety, helped the Legislature establish a regulated, 21+ adult marketplace for all hemp-infused products. He leads the cannabis practice with Sam Weinstein and Regina Appolon at Princeton Public Affairs Group.



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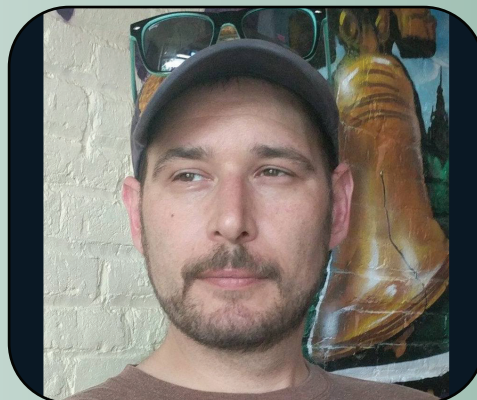
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10. CHRIS GOLDSTEIN

Cannabis Activist

Regional head of the National Organization to Reform Marijuana Laws (NORML) and federal cannabis policy expert, Goldstein famously scored a presidential marijuana pardon.



11. SCOTT RUDDER

Original Founder of the New Jersey CannaBusiness Association

A former Assemblyman and former Mayor of Riverside, Rudder last year opened his own dispensary, Township Green, as part of a local effort to revitalize the downtown business district. He was dubbed the “Mayor of Cannabis” by NJ.com.



12. CJ GRIFFIN

Partner, Pashman Stein

Director of the Justice Gary S. Stein Public Interest Center at Pashman Stein Walder Hayden (Stein Public Interest Center), Griffin champions social, racial, and economic justice; civil liberties and constitutional rights; and an open and transparent government. Look for this public advocate powerhouse to continue to earn distinction as convicted felon President Donald J. Trump and his allies persevere in taking a chainsaw to the law.



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13. PATRICIA A. ZITA

CEO, The Zita Group

One of the state's top lobbyists, co-founder of one of the top five firms in the state and the largest firm founded and owned by a woman, Zita oversees a lobbying and public affairs firm that specializes in government, business development, and notably, cannabis consulting.



14. LOU MAGAZZU

Counsel, Weiner Law Group LLC

Top notch South Jersey-based attorney who, significantly, navigated the bureaucracy for clients in the pioneering days of cannabis legalization, providing counsel for companies awarded New Jersey's earliest cannabis licenses in 2018-2019 for the round two applications.



15. AMOL SINHA

ACLU Executive Director for NJ

An early aggressive advocate to end racial disparities in marijuana possession arrests, Sinha – leader of the ACLU in NJ since 2017 – continues to play a large role in the Garden State's drug policy reform work.





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16. JAY LASSITER

Activist and Writer

The gifted professional public needler did more than any single reporter or writer to influence the legalization of marijuana in the state, and he continues to dedicatedly occupy the smoke-filled forward lines of all matters pertaining to cannabis.



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BRENDAN GILL, CEO

17. STEVEN FULOP

*Jersey City Mayor, 2025 Candidate
for Governor*

An early advocate for pot legalization, Fulop has adopted a laissez faire attitude toward the locating of pot distribution centers in Jersey City, home to at least 46 cannabis dispensaries. But Fulop dug in against a decision by Attorney General Matt Platkin (see above), arguing that cannabis use by off-duty cops violates federal law.



18. PAUL JOSEPHSON

Partner, Duane Morris

Longtime veteran insider Johnson previously served as Policy Counsel for the New Jersey Cannabis Industry Association, assisting in the development of New Jersey's cannabis regulatory system.



19. TARA SARGENTE

Cannabis Entrepreneur

Creator of Blazin' Bakery pot brownie mixes and the brainchild of Alchemy Green, fully licensed NJ cannabis manufacturer Sargente is among the most credible NJ champions of edibles.



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20. MARIA DEL CID-Kosso

Commissioner, NJ Cannabis Regulatory Commission

Director of Policy and Legislative Services at the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), alumna of the New Jersey New Leaders Council, Emerge NJ, and Rutgers NEW Leadership Program. Former board member of LUPE Fund Inc., a Barack Obama Fellow (OFA), and the first Latina elected president of the Union County Young Democrats.



21. AMI KACHALIA

Campaign Strategist at the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey

Kachalia develops and implements policy advocacy campaigns with a focus on criminal justice reform and immigrants' rights. Formerly of the Drug Policy Alliance in Trenton, where she focused on public health and criminal justice reform.



22. RAS BARAKA

Newark Mayor, Gubernatorial Candidate

A longtime vocal advocate of expungement laws, Baraka made sure to remind lawmakers throughout the legalization process of the inequality and unjustness of businesses and corporations prospectively making millions off of cannabis sales, while the state incarcerates people for minor possession infractions.





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23. JEFF BOOKER AND NICHELLE SANTOS

CannaCoverage Founders

The business partners and founders of the Newark-based insurance firm specialize in products and protective services – including risk management – while networking clients to the evolving, multifaceted NJ cannabis community.



24. RYAN MAGEE

McCarter & English Partner

Former prosecutor Magee advises clients on a range of issues pertinent to the cannabis industry, including license applications to cultivate, manufacture, and dispense medical and adult-use cannabis. In addition, he provides regulatory and compliance guidance. He is an adjunct professor in Rutgers Law School's Certificate in Cannabis Law and Business program for cannabis entrepreneurs and license holders.



25. DANIEL ULLOA

Editor and Publisher Heady NJ

Ulloa heads up Heady NJ, a vital independent news site covering cannabis news on the local level in New Jersey. In the editor's words: "We cover the fight in New Jersey for medical and adult use cannabis, hemp, and psychedelics legalization, along with the businesses springing forth and the culture surrounding it."





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26. JACQUELINE FERRARO

*Managing Director and Co-Founder,
Cannabis Advisory Group*

Longtime advocate Ferraro played a critical role in the drafting of New Jersey's expanded medical cannabis legislation and adult-use bill under Governor Murphy's administration. In addition, she is a key voice for federal cannabis legal reform.



27. MAGGIE MORAN

Founder and CEO of Moxie Strategies

A strategic advisor for NJ Cannabusiness Association, inveterate insider Moran, with considerable campaign management experience, previously founded two award-winning public affairs firms and is an experienced CEO and strategist. She was a critical player in the passage of medical marijuana in New York and recreational marijuana in New Jersey.



28. HUGH O'BEIRNE

Founder, Hawthorne Ave. Strategies

Beirne's consulting firm focuses on optimizing business outcomes and strategic goals for US and international cannabis operators. Formerly President and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the New Jersey Cannabis Industry Association (NJCIA).



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29. GUILLERMO ARTILES

Partner, McCarter & English LLC

Veteran of the last two NJ gubernatorial administrations and for a New Jersey federal judge, Artiles focuses his practice on government affairs and complex business litigation, and leads the firm's Cannabis Group.



30. LEO BRIDGEWATER

Activist and Advocate

The former Army Specialist who served multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan used his own PTSD struggles as the catalyst to fight for veterans' legal access to cannabis. NJ Chapter President of Minorities for Medical Marijuana.



31. CHARLES BARKER

Commissioner, NJ Cannabis Regulatory Commission

Appointed to the commission by Governor Murphy, Barker formerly served as Constituent Advocate and Projects Specialist for the People on behalf of the Office of U.S. Senator Cory Booker, where he managed Booker's cannabis policy positions.



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**DAVID PARANO
PARANO & ASSOCIATES**



32. JEANNINE LARUE

Host, LaRuelist Café

Longtime lobbyist, activist, healthcare professional, and outspoken champion of cannabis legalization, LaRue retired from Rutgers University as Vice President of Public Affairs, and formerly served as Deputy Chief of Staff for former New Jersey Governor Jon S. Corzine.



33. KRISTA NASH

Commissioner, NJ Cannabis Regulatory Commission

Formerly director of the PROMISE Program, Nash worked as an advocate for individuals leaving the criminal justice system with co-occurring disorders. Expert driver of social justice initiatives impacting incarcerated individuals who struggle with homelessness, substance use and mental health disorders.



34. JEFF BROWN

Acting Commissioner, NJ Department of Health

Brown served as the executive director of the Cannabis Regulatory Commission, managing the staff, functions, and operations of the Commission in regulating New Jersey's cannabis industry. Formerly assistant commissioner at the New Jersey Department of Health, overseeing the Division of Medicinal Marijuana.



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35. FRUQAN MOUZON

Fox Rothchild

Focused on cannabis law, litigation and regulatory compliance, Mouzon specializes in guiding clients through all steps of the cannabis licensing and compliance process. Former General Counsel for the New Jersey State Senate Majority Office and Assistant Counsel to former New Jersey Gov. John Corzine, Mouzon played a pivotal role in helping to write the 2021 state law legalizing recreational use of cannabis in New Jersey.



36. CHRIS DONNELLY

General Manager, Avoq's New Jersey office

Veteran Trenton insider Donnelly played a significant role in New Jersey's 2020 cannabis legalization effort. Expert in all areas of government, Donnelly worked both for former U.S. Rep. Rush Holt, and for former Senate President Steve Sweeney, now a candidate for New Jersey Governor in the Democratic Primary.



37. TRACY McHUGH

Activist

A patient advocate, and medical cannabis activist, McHugh also lends her expertise to those looking for a Cannabis and CBD Industry Tax Professional.





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38. WESLEY McWHITE

*Director, Office of Diversity and Inclusion,
NJ Cannabis Regulatory Commission*

McWhite builds relationships with New Jersey's unrepresented and underrepresented communities to facilitate their participation in the state's cannabis industry – as businesses or as patients.



39. JO ANNE ZITO

*Board Member, Coalition for
Medical Marijuana*

Zito is a critical voice in the home-grow movement, primarily on behalf of the state's medical marijuana patients, equity, and also for social justice.



40. DARRIN CHANDLER JR.

RIPCO

Formerly of Coldwell Banker and later Keller Williams, Chandler joined RIPCO's New Jersey office in 2022 and serves as Director of Cannabis Real Estate focusing on cannabis operator representation.



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41. EDMUND DEVEAUX

Board Member, NJ Cannabis Association

Former Aide to the Mayor, City of New Brunswick, and former special assistant to US Senator Bill Bradley, Rutgers University grad Deveau, a former commissioned officer in the United States Army, thrives at all levels of state and federal government. Former capital budget analyst in the New Jersey Department of the Treasury – Office of Management and Budget, where he oversaw the capital budgets and related projects for the New Jersey departments of Corrections, Human Services, New Jersey State Police, and the Department of State.



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42. EDWARD “LEFTY” GRIMES

Activist

Key Bayonne-based home-grow advocate Grimes uses cannabis to combat pain from a back injury and wants others to have access to cannabis to manage their own pain. Grimes has been a frequent, vocal advocate for patients, traveling around the state talking to councils and mayors.



43. MICHAEL HOFFMANN

Cannabis Specialist - Assessment and Social Control of Legalized Cannabis

Attorney Hoffman routinely makes recommendations to the Cannabis Regulatory Commission through the NJ Cannabis Law Committee. Expert interpreter of all laws and court decisions related to cannabis and the cannabis industry.



44. TENISHA VICTOR

Owner, Clique Canna

Experienced professional Victor advises on cannabis licensing, cultivation, production, dispensary operations, P&L management, financial modeling, licensing acquisition, multi-state zoning, regulatory compliance, retail and wholesale development, multi-site operations, supply chain, inventory management, auditing, projections, acquisitions, model design, vendor and contractor management, government relations, team management, training and hiring.





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45. FAYE COLEMAN

Co-founder and CEO of Pure Genesis, LLC

Coleman's woman and minority-based (certified MWBE) business serves as a requested provider of cannabis (hemp) products, services, consulting, and educational programming for the ever-evolving cannabis industry, centralized around health improvement products and research in partnership with Rowan University.



46. MARIANNE BAYS, M.D.

The cannabis industry business consultant, analyst and entrepreneur served as the lead consultant on cannabis business license application projects in eight states, and the District of Columbia, helping to win licenses for her clients in six of these locations. In 2017, Dr. Bays established a cannabis contract manufacturing business, targeting MA and NJ.



47. JESSICA F. GONZALEZ

Associate Attorney, Rudick Law Group

An award-winning cannabis attorney, adjunct professor, advocate, consultant and international speaker, Gonzalez led the social impact committee for NJ CAN 2020, the coalition that ran the most successful cannabis legalization campaign in the U.S.





Pictured above:
Sean M. Spiller, President (center)
Steve Beatty, Vice President (left)
Petal Robertson, Secretary-Treasurer (right)

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48. PATRICK KENNEDY

Former Congressman

The most vocal anti-pot legalization voice in the state, the Brigantine-based Kennedy is primarily a mental health advocate. His wife, Amy Kennedy, in 2020, ran unsuccessfully for Congress against U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew.



49. MATT FRIEDMAN

Reporter, Politico

The author of *Politico Playbook* wakes New Jersey's news consumers up each morning with his snarky and smart Trenton-based insights into the machinations of New Jersey politics.



50. HECTOR CORCHADO

*Board Member, New Jersey
CannaBusiness Association (NJCBA)*

Retired law enforcement professional from the City of Newark Corchado served as Police Segreant, and as Newark Deputy Mayor and North Ward Councilman.

