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Canadian cannabis workers wouldn't be denied entry into the US under new House bill

Canadian cannabis workers wouldn't be denied entry into the US under new legislation introduced this week in Congress.

Called the Maintaining Appropriate Protections for Legal Entry, or MAPLE Act, the bill would ensure that non-US citizens are not penalized under federal law for working in the cannabis sector of a foreign country, among other jurisdictions. The bill would create exceptions in U.S. immigration code.

Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Oregon) filed the bill on Tuesday, according to his press secretary. Oregon is one of 11 US states in which cannabis is legal for medical and recreational purposes.

The congressman submitted an earlier version of the bill in December, about two months after Canada started to allow legal cannabis sales.

READ: Canadian cannabis workers could face a lifetime border ban but it's not likely

The bill's creation also comes after reports of Canadian cannabis executives and investors traveling on business and to conferences being barred from entering the US.

Currently, the US Customs and Border Protection, or CBP, maintains it would ban Canadian citizens visiting the US if they admit to working or even investing in the cannabis sector, which has been fully legal in Canada for adult recreational use since last October.

The CBP deems any investment, even in medical cannabis, a crime because cannabis, like heroin, remains a Schedule I drug in the US and thus illegal at the federal level.

For example, according to Bloomberg Law, the CBP had questioned a Canadian investor in the cannabis industry who was traveling to Las Vegas to attend a marijuana industry conference and tour a new cannabis facility. The CBP then banned the investor for life from entering the US.

The CBP declined to comment on Rep. Blumenauer's bill.

Under the bill, visitors to the US wouldn't be denied entry for engaging in the "trafficking, sale, or distribution of marijuana if the conduct was lawful or subsequently made lawful in the State, Indian Tribe, or foreign country in which it occurred."

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