



This Feb. 17, 2016, file photo, shows marijuana plants at a home in Honolulu.

AP Photo/Marina Riker, File

Liberal Hawaii decides again not to legalize pot

By **AUDREY MCAVOY**
Associated Press

HONOLULU — On the political spectrum, Hawaii is among the bluest of states. Democrats control all the levers of power at the state and federal levels, and voters back Democratic presidential candidates over Republicans by some of the widest margins in the U.S.

The state has committed to the Paris climate agreement that President Donald Trump rejected and was the first state to require people to be 21 to buy cigarettes. The tourist haven even banned certain types of sunscreen because they can harm coral reefs.

But when it comes to legalizing recreational marijuana for adult use, the islands are out of step with liberal stalwarts, such as California and Vermont that have already done so, and other left-leaning states, such as New York and New Jersey that are racing toward joining them. On

Friday, a legalization bill that made it farther in the legislative process than previous efforts died when lawmakers failed to consider it in time for a deadline.

Senate Majority Leader J. Kalani English has introduced marijuana legalization bills for the past 15 years — but Hawaii has a track record of moving slowly on social issues. For example, other states moved far more quickly to sanction gay marriage and medically assisted suicide.

Half the Democrats in the state Senate co-sponsored English’s measure, helping spur speculation this would be the year legalization becomes reality.

But the effort fizzled as other leaders worried about contradicting federal law, which continues to classify marijuana as an illegal drug, and jeopardizing Hawaii’s existing medical marijuana program.

To move forward, the bill had to pass the Senate Health

Committee and Senate Ways and Means Committee by a Friday deadline so it could be considered by the full Senate. But the Health Committee did not schedule a meeting on Friday to consider any bills, effectively killing the marijuana legalization measure.

Rep. Della Au Belatti, the House majority leader, said before the bill died that she believes Hawaii will legalize adult use marijuana at some point. But she said lawmakers will vet the issue carefully.

“I also think that we have enough folks who are sitting around the table who are saying ‘Let’s do it right. Let’s not just rush into things and let’s do it right,’” she said.

Belatti said lawmakers must closely study the experiences of states that have legalized marijuana. She also wants to have abuse prevention, treatment and education programs set up before legalization. Hawaii also will have to make sure

legalized marijuana doesn’t lead to more impaired driving, she said.

For now, Belatti said she’s just inclined toward decriminalizing marijuana, or reducing fines and criminal penalties for possession.

Twelve states and the District of Columbia have recreational marijuana laws. All except Vermont did it by ballot initiative, an option not available in Hawaii.

Sen. Karl Rhoads, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said Hawaii residents are becoming more accepting of legalization now because it has happened elsewhere and “the world hasn’t come to an end.” There’s also recognition that the status quo isn’t working, he said, noting that juniors at a high school near his district tell him they can get pot whenever they want.

“It’s like Prohibition,” he said. “We’ve been trying to squish it out, squeeze it out, by making it illegal. And it’s just failed miserably.”

Eyeing 2020 race, White House steps up ‘socialism’ attack on Dems

By **ZEKE MILLER**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As the White House gears up for the 2020 campaign, it’s pressing the case that Democrats are rallying behind what it’s calling the policies of “socialism.”

Trying to portray Democrats as out of step with ordinary Americans, Vice President Mike Pence said in a speech on Friday at the Conservative Political Action Conference that the choice in the next election is “between freedom and socialism, between personal responsibility and government dependence.”

It was the latest step in a coordinated effort by President Donald Trump and his allies to drive up enthusiasm among the GOP base by sowing fears about the policies pushed by Democrats.

“The moment America becomes a socialist country is the moment America ceases to be America,” Pence told the crowd of conservative activists.

Pence also took aim at “Medicare-for-all” and the Green New Deal, policy proposals prominent in the crowded Democratic contest for the presidential nomination.

The Medicare proposal really means “quality health care for none,” Pence said. And “the only thing green” about the Democrats’ environmental framework to combat climate change, the vice president said, “is how much green it’s going to cost taxpayers if we do it: \$90 trillion.”

The American Action Forum, a Republican-linked think tank, has estimated that the Green New Deal could cost \$51 trillion to \$93 trillion over 10 years. Democrats have not specified a price tag,



Pence

though Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, who introduced the plan along with Massachusetts Sen. Ed Markey, said it would be “the same way we paid for the original New Deal, World War II, the bank bailouts, tax cuts for the rich and decades of war — with public money appropriated by Congress.”

The health care and climate proposals have become litmus tests in the race for the Democratic nomination, with many liberals embracing the ideas even as some pragmatists raise questions about cost and feasibility.

White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow said at the conference on Thursday that Americans should “put socialism on trial, and then convict it.” Trump was expected to deliver a similar message when he addresses the conference on Saturday.

A Trump campaign official said the campaign was exploring ways to use the “socialism” message to drive a wedge between Democratic voters and independents. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe internal planning.

The campaign also believes that the attacks will activate Trump’s base, which may have lost some motivation because the president has run into congressional opposition as he tries to fulfill his U.S.-Mexico border wall promise.

The head of the Republican National Committee, Ronna McDaniel, told the conference on Thursday that the GOP would look to “go out and educate” voters about socialism.

Responding to Pence’s socialism accusation, Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren said: “This is no surprise. It’s nonsense, but Donald Trump and Donald

U.S. hits Venezuela officials with sanctions for blocking aid

By **MATTHEW LEE**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration imposed sanctions Friday on six high-ranking members of the Venezuelan security forces and revoked the visas of other officials and their relatives in the latest effort to pressure President Nicolas Maduro into leaving office.

The sanctions are in response to the blocking of humanitarian aid convoys last week while the visa revocations on dozens of individuals are intended to punish

people who have flourished amid the South American country’s dire economic crisis, Elliott Abrams, the special representative for Venezuela, told reporters.

“Maduro supporters that abuse or violate human rights, steal from the Venezuelan people or undermine Venezuela’s democracy are not welcome in the United States,” Abrams said. “Neither are their family members who enjoy a privileged lifestyle at the expense of the liberty and prosperity of millions of Venezuelans.”

The measures were the

latest by the Trump administration to increase the international pressure on Maduro, whose re-election last year is seen as illegitimate, to resign and turn power over to the opposition leader Juan Guaido, who has been recognized by the U.S. and 50 other government as interim president.

The State Department later said that the U.S. had revoked the visas of 49 people, making them subject to deportation if they are in the country. It placed an unspecified number of others on a visa restriction list.

The U.S. already has travel bans on other high-ranking Venezuelan officials connected to Maduro who are accused of committing human rights abuses or corruption.

Separately, the Treasury Department imposed financial sanctions on six officials from the National Guard and police who are allied with Maduro. These officials played a role in closing Venezuela’s borders with Brazil and Colombia to prevent the entry of assistance from countries opposed to Maduro’s continued rule.



AP Photo/Seth Wenig

The United States special envoy to Venezuela Elliott Abrams looks over the room before the start of a Security Council meeting at U.N. headquarters on Thursday.

McKay Creek Estates

FREE Cognitive Screening

Is Mom a little more forgetful lately?

There are many early warning signs of a potential memory disorder, such as Alzheimer’s disease. That’s why we’re offering a **FREE** and **CONFIDENTIAL** cognitive screening. We encourage anyone who is concerned about cognitive decline to take this short, in-person screening. The screening is administered by a qualified health care professional.

To schedule your cognitive screening today, please call (541) 704-7146.

McKay Creek Estates
1601 Southgate Pl.
Pendleton, OR 97801

Prestige Senior Living, L.L.C.

www.PrestigeCare.com

HERITAGE STATION
The Umatilla County Historical Society Museum

Saturday, March 9th
Roy Raley Room • 5:30 to 9 PM
Doors Open at 5 PM

Umatilla County Historical Society Presents:
TRIVIA GAMES 2019

Join us for a night of fun, food, and trivia...complete with prizes and bragging rights!

Proceeds from Trivia Games and the entertaining live auction benefit Heritage Station Museum!

Get a jump on the competition and start studying!
Trivia Games 2019 is all about the “Diverse Peoples of Umatilla County”

Tickets are \$25/person, or \$120/table of 6
Ticket price includes a Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner & Dessert

Tickets are available at Heritage Station Museum
108 SW Frazer, Pendleton