

Luetkemeyer: Cannabis banking negotiations over gun shop protections 'down to just the last few words'

By Natalie Fertig

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Negotiations over a key section of the cannabis banking bill — addressing protections for gun shops — are close to wrapping up, according to one of the lead negotiators on the legislation.

Rep. [Blaine Luetkemeyer](#) (R-Mo) told POLITICO on Wednesday that lawmakers have continued to work on it for the last six months, sending bill text back and forth. Most recently, he approved another version that was sent back to the Senate just last week.

"We're down to just the last few words," Luetkemeyer said. "I'm at a place I'm comfortable with. They've gotta get comfortable where I'm at."

The backdrop: The key section lawmakers are discussing is section 10, which contains provisions that address an Obama-era program called Operation Choke Point. GOP lawmakers argue the program unfairly targeted businesses like gun manufacturers and oil and gas companies.

The language was added in the House before it passed [that chamber the first time in 2019](#), and has support from conservatives like Sen. [Cynthia Lummis](#) (R-Wyo.) who otherwise may not support the cannabis banking bill on its own.

What last few words are they discussing? Luetkemeyer mentioned one specific request he made: He asked negotiators to add the word "intimidate" to the language. That's intended to ensure that regulators can't intimidate a bank into not serving a specific sector. That add was approved by Senate negotiators, he said.

The offices of Sen. [Kyrsten Sinema](#) (I-Ariz.) and Majority Leader [Chuck Schumer](#) (D-N.Y.), two of the main negotiators in the Senate, either did not respond to a request for comment or declined to comment for this story.