



Legislative Work Group

Feb. 9, 2026

[HB 797/SB 439](#) – Employment Discrimination etc.

- Hearing in Senate Finance 2/19, 1:00 PM
- Public Health Law Clinic research:
 - 22 states have statutory or regulatory employment protections for medical cannabis users (plus D.C.)
 - Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia
 - Massachusetts does not have a non-discrimination statute, but requires reasonable accommodations through judicial precedent
 - Louisiana has employment protections for state employees, but explicitly excludes certain employment types including EMS and firefighters. Similarly, Washington excludes certain industries, including firefighters and first responders.

HB 544: Cannabis Use in Motor Vehicle etc.

- Hearing in House Judiciary 2/11, 2:00 PM (testimony due today)
- Among other adult-use states, only one had a law adding additional criminal penalties for cannabis consumption in a vehicle when a child is present. Vermont prohibits smoking of both cannabis and tobacco in a car with a minor; however, the penalty is a fine, there is no risk of incarceration.
- Most states have some provision similar to Maryland's laws regarding consumption by drivers and/or passengers, but do not have specific offenses that are dependent on presence of children in the vehicle.

SB 594: Cannabis – Advertising - Alterations

- Sponsors: Senators Beidle and Gile
- Senate Finance Committee
- Removes prohibition against elements that indirectly appeal to or target underage individuals
 - Cannabis ads may not “directly ~~or indirectly~~ target individuals under the age of 21 years”
 - May not contain an element that “targets ~~or is attractive to~~ minors, including a cartoon character, a mascot, or any other depiction that is commonly used to market products to minors”

SB 594: Continued

- Adds a definition of “Therapeutic or medical claim”:
 - “a claim that explicitly states a product can diagnose, treat, mitigate, cure, or prevent a disease or condition”
 - Such claims require supporting evidence and the inclusion of a warning about side effects
 - This language borrows from the FDA definition of a “drug”
 - Using a more specific definition narrows the types of advertisements that would be subject to the evidence and warning requirements

SB 594: Continued

- For the purpose of establishing expected audience age composition, the MCA shall accept:
 - “The most recent and readily available audience composition data from the television, radio, internet, mobile application, social media, or other electronic communication, event sponsorship, or print publication entity with which the cannabis licensee advertises or proposes to advertise”
 - Also requires the MCA to develop an alternate method to evaluate audience composition

SB 594: Continued

- Allows cannabis businesses to add an additional exterior sign with certain administrative/safety information
 - Max size of 900 sq. ins. (2.5 feet by 2.5 feet, if square)
 - Content:
 - Indicates business is a trusted source / licensed dispensary
 - Provides contact information for the business
 - Provides contact information for the MCA
 - Provides info about contacting 911 and Poison Control
 - Indicates ownership or license designation

SB 594: Continued

- Clarifies that the use of trademarks, branding, and business information in the context of news articles, interviews, and editorial content is not considered advertisement