

Highlights for week ending April 15, 2016

STATE OF VERMONT

The legislature will wrap up shortly, and lawmakers are being asked to conclude their work on bills as they march toward a close of the session. Senate morning committee meetings end this coming week and the focus will be on “money” bills and legislation that is deemed “must haves” for this year.

H.277 An act relating to regulation and taxation of marijuana

The bill was in the House Ways & Means Committee this week, and the latest discussions revolve around allowing the licensed cultivation of up to two plants at home for personal recreational use. This would require a license and fee, and there is still a plan to earmark \$500,000 for education and law enforcement purposes. The version of the bill was passed out of committee with a vote of 7-4 and will now be debated on the House Floor.

Governor Shumlin, a proponent of marijuana legislation, stated: “I want to thank the House Ways and Means Committee for their work on this legislation. There is no question that we can and must improve on the current system of marijuana prohibition that is failing us so miserably. The Committee’s action today takes a step towards addressing the nonsensical system that asks the one in eight Vermonters who admit to using marijuana on a monthly basis to buy it from a drug dealer. I believe there is merit as well in the approach taken by the Senate, which goes further towards addressing the many issues that currently exist because of the failed War on Drugs policy of marijuana prohibition. I appreciate the Committee’s work on this bill and look forward to working with the Legislature to chart a smarter policy on marijuana.”

H.261 “Ban the Box”, Criminal record inquires by an employer

The bill as previously passed out of the House was amended by the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs this week to allow employers to ask of the applicant at the initial interview if they have been convicted of a crime that prohibits them from being hired for a position according to state or federal laws. This version passed the Senate by voice vote on Friday, April 15.

IN FEDERAL NEWS...

Check out this interesting 2nd U.S. Court of Appeals case concerning FMLA:

<https://www.shrm.org/legalissues/federalresources/pages/hr-director-may-be-liable-for-fmla-breach.aspx>

And this equal pay lawsuit filed by members of the U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team:

<https://www.shrm.org/legalissues/federalresources/pages/women-soccer-players-sue.aspx>

For more information about the SHRM Vermont State Council Employment Law & Legislative Advocacy Update, please contact Shelley Field at shelley.field@casella.com or (802) 772-2215.