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House Votes to Allow Oregonians to Clear their Record of Outdated Marijuana Convictions

Legislation establishes expedited expungement process for marijuana convictions

SALEM – Under legislation that passed the Oregon House of Representatives today, Oregonians would be able to set aside past convictions for marijuana-related offenses that are no longer illegal under state law.

[Senate Bill 420](#) specifically allows a person convicted of marijuana possession, delivery, and manufacturing offenses that are no longer crimes under current law to apply to have his or her conviction set aside. Eligible offenses must have occurred before July 1, 2015.

“The criminal convictions that resulted from the war on drugs have life altering consequences,” said bill sponsor Rep. Janelle Bynum (D-Happy Valley). “This is the least we can do to eliminate barriers to housing, employment and education for people across the state who are still paying the price for actions that we have decriminalized. The impact of these convictions is life-long and extends beyond the individuals to their families and communities.”

Having past criminal convictions set aside can be costly, which has prolonged the injustices of the discriminatory war on drugs. To ensure cost is not a barrier for those seeking to have their past convictions set aside, the legislation exempts the person filing from applicable fees and removes the standard that an individual provide fingerprints and undergo a background check.

In 2014, the Oregon voters passed Ballot Measure 91, creating a recreational marijuana market in the state. Subsequent legislation legalized the growth, sale and consumption of marijuana.

“Past convictions like these can have long-term impacts on an individual’s ability to get a job, and find a safe, secure place to live,” said bill sponsor Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer (D-Portland). “This is an important step to address the disproportionate impact of the criminal justice system on communities of color.”

Sen. Lew Frederick (D-Portland) was the chief sponsor of the legislation. Joining Rep. Bynum and Rep. Keny-Guyer as sponsors of the legislation are Sen. James Manning Jr. (D-Eugene) and Rep. Jennifer Williamson (D-Portland).

The bill, which passed 42 to 15, now goes to Gov. Kate Brown.

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