

2026 -- S 2962

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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A N A C T

RELATING TO FOOD AND DRUGS -- THE RHODE ISLAND CANNABIS ACT

Introduced By: Senators Bissailon, LaMountain, Mack, and Acosta

Date Introduced: March 04, 2026

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

(by request)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 21-28.11-6 of the General Laws in Chapter 21-28.11 entitled "The
2 Rhode Island Cannabis Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **21-28.11-6. Cannabis advisory board.**

4 (a) There is hereby established a cannabis advisory board, which is directed to work in
5 collaboration with the commission and the administrator of the cannabis office to advise and issue
6 recommendations ~~on the use, commerce, regulation and effects of adult use and medical cannabis~~
7 ~~within the state. The advisory board shall additionally provide recommendations to the commission~~
8 ~~regarding the administration and distribution of the social equity assistance fund established~~
9 ~~pursuant to § 21-28.11-31~~ on matters relating to the regulation and policy development of the state's
10 cannabis program.

11 (b) The advisory board shall convene at the request of the commission for the purpose of
12 considering specific questions or issues identified by the commission, and shall issue
13 recommendations in response to such requests.

14 ~~(b)(c)~~ **Membership.** The advisory board shall consist of eleven (11) voting members, ~~and~~
15 ~~eight (8) non-voting members.~~

16 ~~(1) The board shall consist of the following non-voting members: the secretary of~~
17 ~~commerce or designee, the director of the department of labor and training or designee, the director~~
18 ~~of the department of health or designee, the commissioner of education or designee, the~~
19 ~~superintendent of public safety or designee, the director of the department of business regulation~~

1 ~~or designee, the secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) or~~
2 ~~designee, and a representative from the University of Rhode Island College of Pharmacy selected~~
3 ~~by the commission.~~

4 ~~(2)~~ The board shall consist of the following voting members: a ~~social equity officer~~
5 chairperson, who shall be appointed by the governor ~~and serve as chair of the advisory board~~; two
6 (2) additional members to be appointed by the governor, one of whom shall represent the cannabis
7 laboratory testing industry, and one of whom shall be appointed in accordance with subsection (e)
8 of this section; four (4) members to be appointed by the speaker of the house, one of whom shall
9 represent the cannabis cultivation industry, and three (3) of whom to be appointed in accordance
10 with subsection (e) of this section; and four (4) members to be appointed by the president of the
11 senate, one of whom shall represent the cannabis retail industry, and three (3) of whom to be
12 appointed in accordance with subsection (e) of this section.

13 ~~(e)~~(d) **Term of voting members.** The voting members shall be appointed to serve three (3)
14 year terms or until a successor is appointed. In the event of vacancy, the vacancy shall be filled in
15 the manner of the original appointment for the remainder of the term.

16 ~~(d)~~(e) **Compensation.** The appointed members and representatives shall receive no
17 compensation for their services.

18 ~~(e)~~(f) **Representation.** The members of the advisory board appointed by the governor, the
19 speaker of the house and the president of the senate pursuant to the provisions of the chapter shall
20 to the extent possible be individuals with expertise in the following areas: public and behavioral
21 health, substance use disorder treatment, effective rehabilitative treatment for adults and juveniles,
22 homelessness and housing, economic development, criminal justice, law enforcement and drug
23 policy. Further, the advisory board shall include representation from communities most impacted
24 by cannabis prohibition, such as individuals with prior drug convictions, the formerly incarcerated,
25 and representatives of organizations servicing communities impacted by past federal and state drug
26 policies.

27 ~~(f)~~(g) **Quorum.** To take action at a meeting, a majority of voting members of the board
28 must be present and voting to constitute a quorum.

29 ~~(g)~~(h) **Role and responsibilities.** The advisory board shall:

30 (1) Consider all matters submitted to the board by the cannabis control commission;

31 (2) Advise and make recommendations to the commission on the preparation and
32 promulgation of guidelines, rules and regulations and any changes to guidelines, rules and
33 regulations that the advisory board deems fundamental or necessary for the commission's review
34 and consideration;

1 (3) Provide analysis and recommendations to the commission relating to the administration
2 and distribution of the social equity assistance fund established pursuant to § 21-28.11-31;

3 (4) Conduct all meetings in compliance with chapter 46 of title 42 (the “open meetings
4 act”); and

5 (5) Report the findings, analysis, recommendations and conclusions adopted and approved
6 by the board to the commission within thirty (30) days of adoption and approval.

7 ~~(H)~~(I) **Subcommittees.** The chair may appoint subcommittees in order to develop and
8 report recommendations and to expedite the work of the board; ~~provided, however, that the chair~~
9 ~~shall appoint:~~

10 ~~(1) A subcommittee on public health to develop recommendations on: products, labeling,~~
11 ~~marketing, advertising, related public health issues; potency, which may include a recommended~~
12 ~~maximum limit for individual servings of cannabis products; and packaging, which may include~~
13 ~~the development and implementation of a public health warning to appear on cannabis products;~~

14 ~~(2) A subcommittee on public safety and community mitigation to develop~~
15 ~~recommendations on law enforcement, property, business, consumer, and any other issues that may~~
16 ~~have an affect on the locality of the cannabis establishment and the surrounding environment;~~

17 ~~(3) A subcommittee on the cannabis industry to develop recommendations on cultivation,~~
18 ~~processing, manufacturing, transportation, distribution, seed to sale tracking systems and market~~
19 ~~stability;~~

20 ~~(4) A subcommittee on market participation to develop recommendations on minority and~~
21 ~~veteran owned businesses, local agriculture and growing cooperatives; and~~

22 ~~(5) A subcommittee on social equity to develop recommendations on remedying the harm~~
23 ~~to individuals directly and adversely impacted by the past enforcement of cannabis related laws.~~

24 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO FOOD AND DRUGS -- THE RHODE ISLAND CANNABIS ACT

- 1 This act would update the Rhode Island cannabis act to eliminate the statutorily required
- 2 subcommittees under the cannabis advisory board.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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