

# ALASKA LEGISLATURE

## Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

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### **House Bill 246 Version I**

### **Access to Marijuana Conviction Records**

### **Sponsor Statement**

In 2014, Alaskans voted to legalize the cultivation, sale, and possession of marijuana for those 21 years old or older. Despite this change in state law, some Alaskans remain blocked from employment and housing due to previous marijuana possession convictions that would not be a crime today.

House Bill 246 would make confidential the records of individuals who were convicted of minor marijuana crimes, were 21 years of age or older at the time of the offense and were not charged with any other crimes in the same incident. These records would automatically be removed from Court View. The records would also be removed from some background checks administered by the Department of Public Safety, if requested by the convicted individual.

According to figures provided by the Alaska Department of Public Safety, at least 8,000 Alaskans have marijuana convictions that are eligible for the record shielding provisions in this portion of the bill. Those convictions can make obtaining housing and gainful employment challenging.

HB 246 would also reduce these same types of low level marijuana misconduct offenses for individuals 18-21 years of age from Class B misdemeanors to violations punishable by a fine and requiring no court appearance. It would also prohibit the Alaska Court System from publishing records of these violations on Court View, going forward from the effective date of the bill.

Now that voters have legalized marijuana, this legislation would allow adults previously convicted to move on with their lives, and reduce the stigma and consequences associated with these low level infractions, while ensuring those in the criminal justice field still have access to appropriate background information.