

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Juneau, Alaska 99801 (Jan. –April)
State Capitol, Room 412
907.465.2095

HOUSE BILL 28

Access to Marijuana Conviction Records

SPONSOR STATEMENT

Alaskans voted to legalize the cultivation, sale, and possession and recreational use of marijuana for persons 21 years of age or older in 2014. Despite this change in state law, some Alaskans remain blocked from employment and housing and other opportunities due to previous marijuana possession convictions that today are recognized as non-criminal activities.

House Bill 28 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, not less than 700 Alaskans are hindered in day to day life by marijuana convictions that are eligible for the confidentiality protections in this bill.

This bill would recategorize low level marijuana offenses for individuals 18-21 years of age from Class B misdemeanors to minor violations punishable by a fine and eliminate unnecessary use of judiciary resources for court hearings. It would also prohibit the Alaska Court System from publishing records of these violations on Court View, from the effective date of the bill going forward.

With Alaskans having spoken by means of legalization of marijuana this bill would allow those that by todays standards would not be considered as a criminal offender to move forward with their life without the obstruction that can be incurred by such a conviction on ones record while still allowing provisions for adequate access to background or statistical information for those appropriate agencies