

House Bill 246 Version A

Sponsor Statement

December 2, 2021

House bill 246 would make confidential the records of individuals who have been convicted of minor marijuana crimes 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.

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.

According to a report prepared by Legislative Research, there were more than 700 Alaskans convicted of low-level marijuana crimes between 2007 and 2017. Those convictions can make obtaining housing and gainful employment challenging.

Now that voters have legalized marijuana, this legislation would allow those previously convicted to move on with their lives, while ensuring those in the criminal justice field still have access to appropriate background information.