

2020 -- H 7218

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LC002985  
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

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A N A C T

RELATING TO FOOD AND DRUGS -- THE EDWARD O. HAWKINS AND THOMAS C.  
SLATER MEDICAL MARIJUANA ACT -- THE RHODE ISLAND CANNABIS EQUITY  
ACT OF 2020

Introduced By: Representatives Williams, Craven, McEntee, Vella-Wilkinson, and  
Cassar

Date Introduced: January 22, 2020

Referred To: House Corporations

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 21-28.6 of the General Laws entitled "The Edward O. Hawkins and  
2 Thomas C. Slater Medical Marijuana Act" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following  
3 section:

4 **21-28.6-19. Social equity and race analysis.**

5 (a) To facilitate greater equity in business ownership and employment in any business  
6 requiring a state license including, but not limited to, the cannabis market, the department of  
7 business regulation (the "department") shall undertake a social equity and race analysis (the  
8 "analysis"), which analysis shall be completed and the results thereof published on or before  
9 January 1, 2021.

10 (b) The social equity and race analysis shall include:

11 (1) A disparity study consisting of both qualitative and quantitative findings to determine  
12 whether racial disparities exist in the process to obtain a state license;

13 (2) To determine whether racial disparities exist in the process to obtain a license to  
14 engage in business relative to the cannabis market, a disparity study on whether racial disparities  
15 exist in the arrest and conviction rates for possession of marijuana by determining percentage  
16 figures for such arrests and convictions aggregated by the following ethnic groups:

17 (i) African-American/Black;

18 (ii) Hispanic/Latino;

- 1           (iii) White;  
2           (iv) Asian; and  
3           (v) Pacific Island/American Indian/Alaskan Native.  
4           (c) The department shall consider, identify, and address the following factors for and  
5 aggregated by each group identified in subsection (b)(2) of this section:  
6           (1) Representation in the general population;  
7           (2) Rates of employment and unemployment;  
8           (3) Poverty rates; and  
9           (4) Arrests for or related to marijuana.  
10          (d) The analysis shall compile data as provided for by this section for the calendar years  
11 2009 through 2019, inclusive, and shall promulgate findings and conclusions relative to racial  
12 disparities and whether racial disparities exist in the process of obtaining a state business license  
13 and to the existence of disparities in arrests and convictions relative to marijuana and shall  
14 identify any ethnic group that has been disproportionately impacted by marijuana prohibition.  
15          (e) All state and municipal agencies shall cooperate with the department to effectuate the  
16 purposes of the analysis.  
17          (f) On or before January 1, 2021, the department shall publish such findings and  
18 conclusions and submit a copy of the analysis to the governor, the speaker of the house, and the  
19 president of the senate.

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

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

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1           This act would direct the department of business regulation to undertake a social equity  
2 and race analysis to examine whether racial disparities exist in the process to obtain a state license  
3 to conduct business, as well as a license to sell marijuana. The analysis would also examine the  
4 arrest and conviction rates pertaining to marijuana and whether racial disparities exist in those  
5 rates of arrest and conviction. The department would publish the analysis on or before January 1,  
6 2021.

7           This act would take effect upon passage.

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