AN ACT RELATING TO FOOD AND DRUGS - UNIFORM CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT

Introduced By: Senators Mack, Acosta, Mendes, Calkin, Anderson, and Bell

Date Introduced: March 11, 2021

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 21-28-4.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 21-28 entitled "Uniform Controlled Substances Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

21-28-4.01. Prohibited acts A -- Penalties.

(a)(1) Except as authorized by this chapter, it shall be unlawful for any person to manufacture, deliver, or possess with intent to manufacture or deliver a controlled substance.

(2) Any person who is not a drug-addicted person, as defined in § 21-28-1.02(20), who violates this subsection with respect to a controlled substance classified in schedule I or II, except the substance classified as marijuana, is guilty of a crime and, upon conviction, may be imprisoned to a term up to life or fined not more than five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000) nor less than ten thousand dollars ($10,000), or both.

(3) Where the deliverance as prohibited in this subsection shall be the proximate cause of death to the person to whom the controlled substance is delivered, it shall not be a defense that the person delivering the substance was, at the time of delivery, a drug-addicted person as defined in § 21-28-1.02(20).

(4) Any person, except as provided for in subdivision (2) of this subsection, who violates this subsection with respect to:

(i) A controlled substance, classified in schedule I or II, is guilty of a crime and, upon conviction, may be imprisoned for not more than thirty (30) years, or fined not more than one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000) nor less than three thousand dollars ($3,000), or both;
(ii) A controlled substance, classified in schedule III or IV, is guilty of a crime and, upon conviction, may be imprisoned for not more than twenty (20) years, or fined not more than forty thousand dollars ($40,000), or both; provided, with respect to a controlled substance classified in schedule III(d), upon conviction may be imprisoned for not more than five (5) years, or fined not more than twenty thousand dollars ($20,000), or both.

(iii) A controlled substance, classified in schedule V, is guilty of a crime and, upon conviction, may be imprisoned for not more than one year, or fined not more than ten thousand dollars ($10,000), or both.

(b)(1) Except as authorized by this chapter, it is unlawful for any person to create, deliver, or possess with intent to deliver, a counterfeit substance.

(2) Any person who violates this subsection with respect to:

(i) A counterfeit substance, classified in schedule I or II, is guilty of a crime and, upon conviction, may be imprisoned for not more than thirty (30) years, or fined not more than one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000), or both;

(ii) A counterfeit substance, classified in schedule III or IV, is guilty of a crime and, upon conviction, may be imprisoned for not more than twenty (20) years, or fined not more than forty thousand dollars ($40,000), or both; provided, with respect to a controlled substance classified in schedule III(d), upon conviction may be imprisoned for not more than five (5) years, or fined not more than twenty thousand dollars ($20,000), or both.

(iii) A counterfeit substance, classified in schedule V, is guilty of a crime and, upon conviction, may be imprisoned for not more than one year, or fined not more than ten thousand dollars ($10,000), or both.

(c)(1) It shall be unlawful for any person knowingly or intentionally to possess a controlled substance, unless the substance was obtained directly from, or pursuant to, a valid prescription or order of a practitioner while acting in the course of his or her professional practice, or except as otherwise authorized by this chapter.

(2) Any person who violates this subsection with respect to:

(i) A controlled substance classified in schedules I, II and III, IV, and V, except the substance classified as marijuana, is guilty of a civil violation crime and, upon conviction, may be imprisoned for not more than three (3) years, or fined not less than five hundred dollars ($500) nor more than five thousand dollars ($5,000), or both and fined one hundred dollars ($100) for each offense;

(ii) More than one ounce (1 oz.) of a controlled substance classified in schedule I as marijuana is guilty of a misdemeanor, except for those persons subject to (a)(1), and, upon
conviction, may be imprisoned for not more than one year, or fined not less than two hundred dollars ($200) nor more than five hundred dollars ($500), or both.

(iii) Notwithstanding any public, special, or general law to the contrary, the possession of a controlled substance for personal use, shall result in the forfeiture of the controlled substance of one ounce (1 oz.) or less of marijuana by a person who is eighteen (18) years of age or older, and who is not exempted from penalties pursuant to chapter 28.6 of this title, shall constitute a civil offense, rendering the offender liable to a civil penalty in the amount of one hundred fifty dollars ($150) and forfeiture of the marijuana, but not to any other form of criminal or civil punishment or disqualification. Notwithstanding any public, special, or general law to the contrary, this civil penalty of one hundred fifty dollars ($150) and forfeiture of the marijuana shall apply if the offense is the first (1st) or second (2nd) violation within the previous eighteen (18) months.

(iv) Notwithstanding any public, special, or general law to the contrary, possession of one ounce (1 oz.) or less of marijuana by a person who is seventeen (17) years of age or older and under the age of eighteen (18) years, and who is not exempted from penalties pursuant to chapter 28.6 of this title, shall constitute a civil offense, rendering the offender liable to a civil penalty in the amount of one hundred fifty dollars ($150) or one hundred dollars ($100) and forfeiture of the marijuana; provided the minor offender completes an approved, drug-awareness program and community service as determined by the court. If the person seventeen (17) years of age or older and under the age of eighteen (18) years fails to complete an approved, drug-awareness program and community service within one year of the disposition, the penalty shall be a three hundred dollar ($300) civil fine and forfeiture of the marijuana, except that if no drug-awareness program or community service is available, the penalty shall be a fine of one hundred fifty dollars ($150) and forfeiture of the marijuana. The parents or legal guardian of any offender seventeen (17) years of age or older and under the age of eighteen (18) shall be notified of the offense and the availability of a drug-awareness and community-service program. The drug-awareness program must be approved by the court, but shall, at a minimum, provide four (4) hours of instruction or group discussion and ten (10) hours of community service. Notwithstanding any other public, special, or general law to the contrary, this civil penalty shall apply if the offense is the first or second violation within the previous eighteen (18) months.

(v) Notwithstanding any public, special, or general law to the contrary, a person not exempted from penalties pursuant to chapter 28.6 of this title found in possession of one ounce (1 oz.) or less of marijuana is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, may be imprisoned for not more than thirty (30) days, or fined not less than two hundred dollars ($200) nor more than five hundred dollars ($500), or both, if that person has been previously adjudicated on a violation for
possession of less than one ounce (1 oz.) of marijuana under (c)(2)(iii) or (c)(2)(iv) two (2) times in the eighteen (18) months prior to the third (3rd) offense.

(vi) Any unpaid civil fine issued under (c)(2)(iii) (c)(2)(i) or (c)(2)(iv) shall double to three hundred dollars ($300) if not paid within thirty (30) days of the disposition. The civil fine shall double again to six hundred dollars ($600) if it has not been paid within ninety (90) days.

(vii) No person may be arrested for a violation of (c)(2)(iii) (c)(2)(i) or (c)(2)(iv) of this subsection except as provided in this subparagraph. Any person in possession of an identification card, license, or other form of identification issued by the state or any state, city, or town, or any college or university, who fails to produce the same upon request of a police officer who informs the person that he or she has been found in possession of what appears to the officer to be one ounce (1 oz.) or less of marijuana, a controlled substance, or any person without any such forms of identification who fails or refuses to truthfully provide his or her name, address, and date of birth to a police officer who has informed such person that the officer intends to provide such individual with a citation for possession of one ounce (1 oz.) or less of marijuana, a controlled substance, may be arrested.

(viii) No violation of (c)(2)(iii) (c)(2)(i) or (c)(2)(iv) of this subsection shall be considered a violation of parole or probation.

(ix) Any records collected by any state agency, tribunal, or the family court that include personally identifiable information about violations of (c)(2)(iii) (c)(2)(i) or (c)(2)(iv) shall not be open to public inspection in accordance with § 8-8.2-21.

(3) Jurisdiction. Any and all violations of (c)(2)(iii) (c)(2)(i) and (c)(2)(iv) shall be the exclusive jurisdiction of the Rhode Island traffic tribunal. All money associated with the civil fine issued under (c)(2)(iii) (c)(2)(i) or (c)(2)(iv) shall be payable to the Rhode Island traffic tribunal. Fifty percent (50%) of all fines collected by the Rhode Island traffic tribunal from civil penalties issued pursuant to (c)(2)(iii) (c)(2)(i) or (c)(2)(iv) shall be expended on drug-awareness and treatment programs for youth.

(4) Additionally, every person convicted or who pleads nolo contendere under (c)(2)(i) or convicted or who pleads nolo contendere a second or subsequent time under (c)(2)(ii), who is not sentenced to a term of imprisonment to serve for the offense, shall be required to:

(i) Perform up to one hundred (100) hours of community service;

(ii) Attend and complete a drug-counseling and education program, as prescribed, by the director of the department of behavioral healthcare, developmental disabilities and hospitals and pay the sum of four hundred dollars ($400) to help defray the costs of this program which shall be deposited as general revenues. Failure to attend may result, after hearing by the court, in jail
(iii) The court shall not suspend any part or all of the imposition of the fee required by this subsection, unless the court finds an inability to pay.

(iv) If the offense involves the use of any automobile to transport the substance or the substance is found within an automobile, then a person convicted or who pleads nolo contendere under (c)(2)(i) and (c)(2)(ii) shall be subject to a loss of license for a period of six (6) months for a first offense and one year for each offense after.

(5) All fees assessed and collected pursuant to (c)(3)(ii), (c)(2)(i) and (c)(2)(iv) shall be deposited as general revenues and shall be collected from the person convicted or who pleads nolo contendere before any other fines authorized by this chapter.

(d) It shall be unlawful for any person to manufacture, distribute, or possess with intent to manufacture or distribute, an imitation controlled substance. Any person who violates this subsection is guilty of a crime and, upon conviction, shall be subject to the same term of imprisonment and/or fine as provided by this chapter for the manufacture or distribution of the controlled substance that the particular imitation controlled substance forming the basis of the prosecution was designed to resemble and/or represented to be; but in no case shall the imprisonment be for more than five (5) years nor the fine for more than twenty thousand dollars ($20,000).

(e) It shall be unlawful for a practitioner to prescribe, order, distribute, supply, or sell an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone for: (1) Enhancing performance in an exercise, sport, or game, or (2) Hormonal manipulation intended to increase muscle mass, strength, or weight without a medical necessity. Any person who violates this subsection is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, may be imprisoned for not more than six (6) months or a fine of not more than one thousand dollars ($1,000), or both.

(f) It is unlawful for any person to knowingly or intentionally possess, manufacture, distribute, or possess with intent to manufacture or distribute, any extract, compound, salt derivative, or mixture of salvia divinorum or datura stramonium or its extracts unless the person is exempt pursuant to the provisions of § 21-28-3.30. Notwithstanding any laws to the contrary, any person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, may be imprisoned for not more than one year, or fined not more than one thousand dollars ($1,000), or both. The provisions of this section shall not apply to licensed physicians, pharmacists, and accredited hospitals and teaching facilities engaged in the research or study of salvia divinorum or datura stramonium and shall not apply to any person participating in clinical trials involving the use of salvia divinorum or datura stramonium.
SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.
This act would make the possession of schedule I through V controlled substances civil violations punishable by a one hundred dollar ($100) fine for each offense. Offenders would also be subject to drug counseling and community service.

This act would take effect upon passage.