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Illinois Church Action on Alcohol & Addiction Problems

Marijuana Alert - December 30, 2020



How state marijuana legalization became a boon for corruption

Almost all the states that legalized pot either require the approval of local officials - as in Massachusetts - or impose a statewide limit on the number of licenses, chosen by a politically appointed oversight board, or both. These practices effectively put million-dollar decisions in the hands of relatively small-time political figures - the mayors and councilors of small towns and cities, along with the friends and supporters of politicians who appoint them to boards. And these strictures have given rise to the exact type of corruption that got Correia in trouble with federal prosecutors. They have also created a culture in which would-be cannabis entrepreneurs feel obliged to make large campaign contributions or hire politically connected lobbyists.

"All government contracting and licensing is subject to these kinds of forces," said Douglas Berman, a law professor at Ohio State University who authors a blog on marijuana policy. But **"there are unique facets to government contracting in [the cannabis] space that makes it uniquely vulnerable to corruption."**

The FBI has been warning states across the country about the public corruption threat posed by the marijuana industry. [Read more](#)

Pot legalization was to expunge marijuana records in IL

Marijuana legalization in Illinois came with grand plans for wiping clean many criminal records involving cannabis. That aspect of the law was so important that on the eve of legalization on Jan. 1, 2020, Gov. J.B. Pritzker pardoned more than 11,000 people of low-level marijuana convictions.

Under the legalization legislation, Illinois State Police were tasked with identifying by Jan. 1, 2021, those cases that occurred since 2013 that could be expunged automatically. That amounts to some 47,000 cases, Toi Hutchinson, Gov. J.B. Pritzker's senior adviser on cannabis, said. With the deadline just days away, state police said they would make an announcement about those expungements soon.

In Cook County, State's Attorney Kim Foxx worked with a nonprofit tech

company called Code for America to identify and clear 2,200 cases early this year. But during the COVID shutdown of courts, that process was delayed for months. Now, prosecutors there plan to expunge another 11,000 cases early in 2021. [Read](#)

Kim Foxx proposes decriminalization of hard drugs like Heroin--similar to Oregon

Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx outlined a bold step forward this week, envisioning some convicted marijuana dealers having their convictions automatically wiped clean, with those busted for cocaine and heroin possession possibly getting their convictions expunged. [Read more](#)

Judge rules against marijuana craft grower applicants seeking immediate licenses

More than three dozen companies who applied for marijuana craft grower licenses will continue to wait after a court ruling kept the permits in limbo.

By law, the 40 grower licenses were supposed to be issued by July 1, but Pritzker has not done so, initially citing delays in reviewing the applications because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

. . . In addition to the craft grower licenses, the Pritzker administration has indefinitely delayed the issuance of infuser and transporter licenses, as well as licenses for 75 new recreational marijuana retail stores, which were due to be awarded May 1. [Read](#)

IL Supreme Court to decide fate of last contested medical marijuana growing license

A five-year court case soon to be brought before the Illinois Supreme Court will determine if a coveted cannabis growing license should continue to be held by the company already using it in Aurora, or potentially go to a rival that wants to set up shop in Zion. [Read more](#)

Elk Grove Village will look into recreational pot businesses

A marijuana referendum was passed in Elk Grove Village in November. Now local officials will look into the process of allowing "recreational" marijuana businesses to operate in the Village.

The committee will be chaired by Trustee Chris Prochno, with **meetings open to the public, beginning as early as January.** While the Village doesn't have any dispensaries, a medical marijuana cultivation facility has operated in the business park since 2016. [Read](#)

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Anita Bedell & ILCAAAP Staff

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