

Illinois Cannabis Update – Adult-Use Recreational Cannabis Bill Filed on 1/25/19

Cannabis Business Legal News

By Darren Grady on February 15, 2019

As many following the state of cannabis law in Illinois know, State Rep. Kelly Cassidy and State Sen. Heather Steans have been working on a proposal for the legalization of adult-use recreational cannabis for some time. They introduced a bill in 2018 but decided not to pursue passage until 2019. Their bill remains in the works, as Rep. Cassidy and Sen. Steans continue to negotiate with state lawmakers, governmental bodies, and Governor Pritzker. While there are some indications that an updated version of the Steans/Cassidy bill will be reintroduced as early as April, State Rep. Carol Ammons (D-Urbana) filed her own bill (HB-0902) on January 25, 2019, which would legalize adult-use recreational cannabis in Illinois.

Rep. Ammons' bill would create the Cannabis Legalization Equity Act. The Act would allow for the legalization of possession and consumption of cannabis in persons over the age of 21 and personal cultivation of up to 24 cannabis plants. The Act would also establish a 10% excise tax on cannabis sales and decree that at least 51% of the cultivation and retail licenses be issued to businesses in communities disproportionately harmed by the war on drugs. Additionally, the Act would legalize the establishment of on-site consumption centers where individuals could safely ingest cannabis products. Further, the Act would expunge a specific set of nonviolent drug offenses.

Given the recent election and swearing in of Governor Pritzker, the time is certainly ripe for cannabis reform in Illinois. Despite this, many believe that Rep. Ammons' bill will not be passed because Illinois lawmakers are focusing on the Steans/Cassidy bill, which would be more restrictive (notably in the number of plants allowed for personal cultivation, 5 vs. 24, and the issue of consumption centers, which the Steans/Cassidy bill would not establish).

In some form, whether it is the imminent revised Steans/Cassidy bill, the Ammons bill, or another piece of legislation, it appears that an adult-use recreational cannabis bill will be fully negotiated, introduced, debated, finalized, voted on, and signed into law in 2019 or 2020. This, of course, would open the doors to Illinois becoming one of the largest cannabis markets in the country. More so now than ever, the legalization of cannabis in Illinois seems inevitable. Businesses thinking of entering the adult-use cannabis marketplace in Illinois

should start preparing now.

Illinois
Cannabis
Update –
Adult-Use
Recreational
Cannabis
Bill Filed on
1/25/19