**At the State House**

**The Senate Finance Committee** will be meeting virtually Wednesday, November 18th at 5:00 p.m. The meeting can be live streamed at: <http://www.rilegislature.gov/CapTV/Pages/default.aspx> Written testimony will be accepted at SLegislation@rilegislature.gov Testimony submitted prior to 3:00 PM on the 18th will be provided to the members of the committee at the hearing and will be included in the meeting records. Testimony submitted after that time will be placed on file.

The Governor’s proposal for **legalization of adult use marijuana** is first on the agenda for the Senate Finance hearing. Article 13 defines “adult” as an individual 21 years of age and older. The Article establishes licensing requirements for the retail sale of marijuana in all forms. It allows adults to legally transport 1 oz. and to possess 5 oz. at a residence. If two or more adults live in a dwelling, they can possess, in the aggregate, 10 oz. Owners of rental properties can, under the proposed Article, ban the smoking or vaping of marijuana on the rental property. Violation of such a rule subjects the individual to a $150 fine by the State as well as any penalties established in writing by the landlord. Smoking and vaping are also banned in businesses. The Article states that no one is permitted to “undertake any task under the influence of marijuana, when doing so would constitute negligence or professional malpractice.” It also bans smoking marijuana in a school bus, on public transportation, on school grounds, at a correctional facility, in any public place, in a drug treatment facility, or when it would affect the health or safety of children.

Article 13 seeks to provide employers with some protections. It specifically states that employers do not have to provide accommodations for the use or possession of marijuana; but it does require employers to have a written policy; and that policy must be provided to employees *prior* to enforcing any policy.

The Article caps THC potency on various products, and establishes testing systems to ensure compliance. Retail establishments cannot be close to schools. Labels on products must warn against driving under the influence as well as to keep the product away from children. Municipalities may adopt zoning laws that do not conflict with state law, and they can collect a municipal impact fee from marijuana establishments.

Taxation of marijuana is actually a sharing of net revenue. The State gets 61% of the net revenue – the licensed retail contractor keeps 29% of the net revenue – the municipality gets 10%.

Lastly, anyone stopped by law enforcement for suspected driving under the influence can be asked to submit to a saliva test in addition to a blood test or breathalyzer test.

The Senate Finance Committee will also take testimony concerning two new proposed Articles to the Governor’s budget. One bars health insurance companies from charging different premiums based on gender. <http://www.omb.ri.gov/documents/Prior%20Year%20Budgets/Operating%20Budget%202021/Amendments/13_GBA%2016%20-%20New%20Article%20-%20Relating%20to%20Accident%20and%20Sickness%20Insurance%20Policies.pdf>

The second proposal would require health insurers to offer Medicare Supplemental Plans to individuals, regardless of whether the person has a disability. <http://www.omb.ri.gov/documents/Prior%20Year%20Budgets/Operating%20Budget%202021/Amendments/15_GBA%2018%20-%20New%20Article%20-%20Relating%20to%20Medicare%20Supplement%20Insurance%20Policies.pdf>

**S.2494, An Act Relating to Taxation – Personal Income Tax**, is on the agenda Wednesday. This act would create a new income tax bracket. The new bracket would be 6.99% on taxable income over $500,000 (the rate is now 5.99%), and any personal income tax collected on income over $500,000 would be deposited into a restricted receipt account, to be spent on education for grades kindergarten through twelfth grade. <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText20/SenateText20/S2494.pdf>

**S.2801, An Act Relating to Taxation – Personal Income Tax**, is the final item on the committee agenda Wednesday. This act would add one new income tax bracket. The new bracket would be a rate of 8.99% on taxable income over $400,500 (in 2011 dollars). Adjusted for inflation, the new tax bracket would apply to taxable income over approximately $475,000 (in 2020 dollars). This act would take effect on January 1, 2021. <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText20/SenateText20/S2801.pdf>

**The House Committee on Oversight** will meet at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 19th. The meeting will be live on Capitol Television, which can be seen on Cox Channels 15 and 61, in high definition on Cox Channel 1061, on Full Channel on Channel 15 and on Channel 34 by Verizon subscribers. It will also be live streamed at <http://ritv.devosvideo.com/show?video=cd679c40105a>

The Committee will hear from Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott and from Governor Gina Raimondo. COVID-19 emergency spending will be reviewed; and a discussion on future potential restrictions is on the agenda.