

Preparing for 2026 - Cannabis and Tobacco Policy Updates

The Legal Resource Center for Public Health Policy
January 7, 2026

Maryland General Assembly

188 Members

- ✓ 141 House of Delegates / 47 Senate: 3 to 1 ratio
- ✓ [Find your Representative](#)
- ✓ Four Year Cycle: 2026 4th Year of Term
- ✓ [Membership Profile](#)

New Speaker of the House: Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk

2026 Maryland Legislative Session

January 14: Session convenes

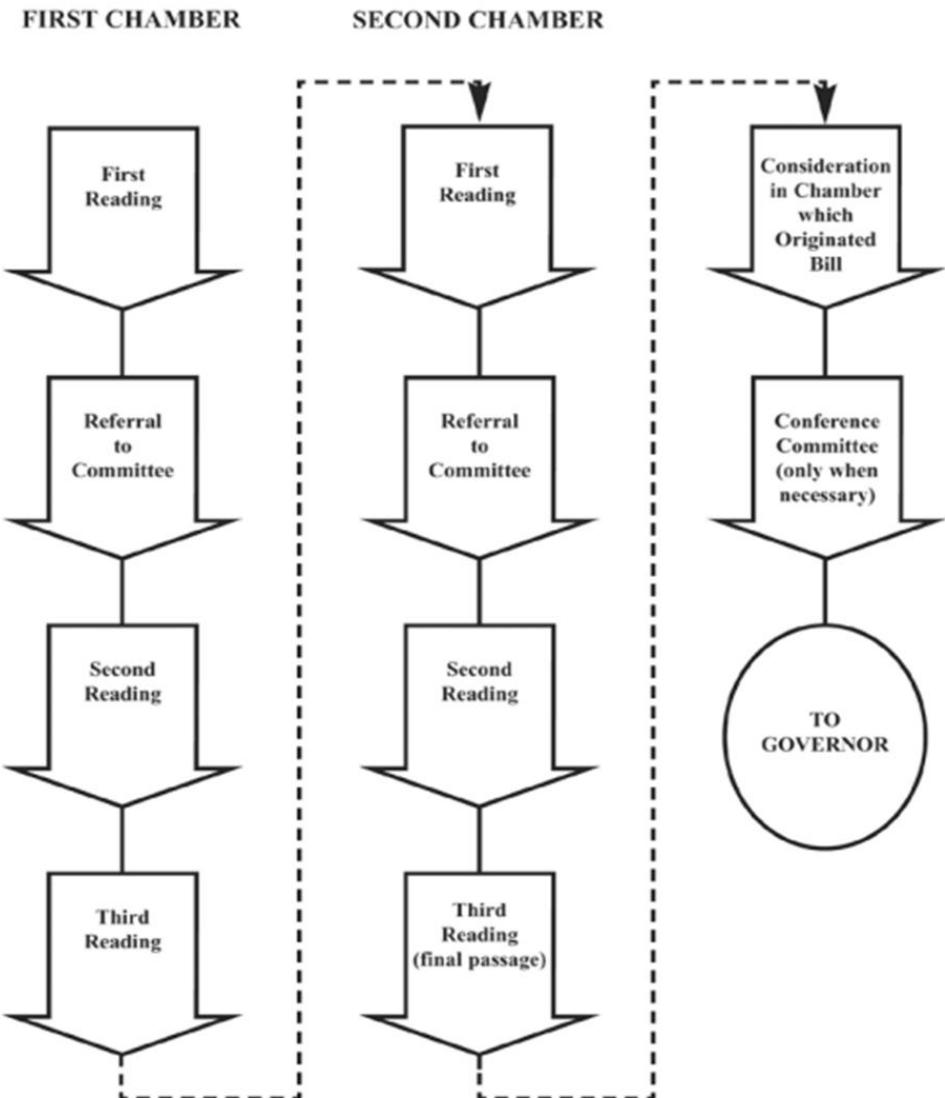
February 9: Senate bill introduction deadline

February 13: House bill introduction deadline

March 23: Bill crossover deadline

April 13: Sine Die

May 13: Final day for extended session



First Reading

“Read” by Clerk of House/Secretary of Senate & Assigned to Committee

Senate Committees

- ✓ Budget and Taxation
- ✓ Education, Energy, and the Environment
- ✓ Executive Nominations
- ✓ Finance
- ✓ Judicial Proceedings
- ✓ Rules

House Committees

- ✓ Appropriations
- ✓ Economic Matters
- ✓ Environment and Transportation
- ✓ Government, Labor, and Elections
- ✓ Health
- ✓ Rules and Executive Nominations
- ✓ Judiciary
- ✓ Ways and Means

Hearing & Voting

Hearing

- ✓ All bill hearings take place in person and are streamed live via the General Assembly website
- ✓ Committees traditionally hear bills on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays beginning at 1:00
- ✓ Anyone can provide oral or written testimony but must sign-up two business days in advance

Voting

- ✓ May make amendments; vote on them first (simple majority)
- ✓ Majority vote (tie does NOT pass): Favorable (with amendments); Unfavorable; No Position (rare)
- ✓ Only favorable (or favorable with amendment) passed on to full body
- ✓ Floor Report Prepared

Floor Readings

Second Reading

- ✓ Presented at Floor Session
- ✓ Opportunity for question and debate
- ✓ May be amended; if offered, voted on first; majority carries
- ✓ Special Order—to a date certain; Laid Over—next day/session
- ✓ Voice Vote—majority
- ✓ Ordered “printed for third reading” (except if crossed over; then “passed to third reader”)

Third Reading

- ✓ May NOT be amended
- ✓ Roll Call—recorded vote; majority
- ✓ **Majority exceptions: Constitutional Amendment or Emergency Bill (3/5 of each chamber)

Crossover... rinse and repeat

Presentment to the Governor

Presentment

- ✓ Must be presented within 20 days of adjournment
- ✓ Does not become law if not presented

Governor may

- ✓ Sign
- ✓ Do nothing
- ✓ Veto
 - ✓ No veto of constitutional amendment
 - ✓ Veto Override: At next session (whether regular or special); 3/5 vote of each chamber to override

Effective Date

Emergency: on signature of Governor (or on the 7th day after presentment) or other date set in bill

Fiscal: July 1

General: October 1

Earliest: June 1

Latest: Can be whenever in the future

Upcoming Tobacco and Cannabis Legislative Issues

Issuance of Alcoholic Beverages Licenses to Tobacconists

Workgroup Established in 2024

- ✓ Chapter 754, Sec. 2, the Acts of 2024
- ✓ Meeting recordings and agendas available on the MDH website [here](#)

Final Report Dated July 2025

- ✓ Full Report available on DLS website [here](#)
- ✓ Consensus vote in favor of Report

Expect legislation consistent with report in 2026

Recommendations

Alter Definition of Tobacconist

- ✓ At least 70% of revenues from sale of premium cigars, pipe tobacco, and related accessories

Related Change in Clean Indoor Air Act Regs

- ✓ MDH to add to CIAA regulations that incidental means no more than 30%

This means that indoor smoking would only be allowed in tobacconists as newly defined.

Recommendations

Alcohol Licensing

- ✓ Tobacconists may be issued an on-site consumption license as consistent with local law; *the alcohol sales must stay within the 30% incidental sales;*
- ✓ Create state BYO license that may be issued to a tobacconist

Recommendations

Regulation and Enforcement

- ✓ ATCC to maintain registry of tobacconists that permit indoor smoking under the CIAA exception;
- ✓ Such tobacconists should be required to display signage that smoking is permitted;
- ✓ Tobacconist adjacent to a childcare or healthcare facility may not permit indoor smoking;
- ✓ Current tobacco retailers that allow indoor smoking have 2 years to come into compliance with 70% rule.

The Devil . . .

. . . is in the legislative details so
stay tuned!



E-Cigarette Registry Bills

- ✓ “Registry” bills establish or amend state product registries or directories and intend to regulate the sale of e-cigarette and other nicotine products.
 - ✓ Generally, these laws limit marketable products to those that have received FDA authorization or have a pending PMTA application.
- ✓ During the 2024 and 2025 legislative sessions, legislatures in many states considered or passed legislation establishing e-cigarette product registries.

Maryland's Past E-cigarette Registry Bills

- ✓ **2024 Legislative Session**

- ✓ [HB 1197](#)

- ✓ [HB 1033](#)

- ✓ [SB 987](#)

- ✓ **2025 Legislative Session**

- ✓ [SB 918](#)

- ✓ [HB 1441](#)

Cannabis Advertising

- ▶ Part of the Cannabis Reform Act was a prohibition against the use of outdoor advertising for cannabis products. This covers billboards, as well as posters, signs, and window displays that are visible to the public.
- ▶ Studies have shown that exposure to cannabis advertising significantly increases young people's perceptions of cannabis and likelihood of underage use.
- ▶ Unlike other forms of marketing, which can be targeted at specific audiences, outdoor advertisements are necessarily visible to anyone who goes outside – including children.
- ▶ Bills have been proposed in the last two legislative sessions to repeal this restriction – [HB 1377 \(2025\)](#), [SB 399 \(2024\)](#).

Employment Discrimination Protections

- ▶ In Maryland, employees can be fired, demoted, or not hired due to legal cannabis use, both medical and recreational, outside of work.
- ▶ Employment is an important social determinant of health (SDH) and can impact other important SDHs such as housing, insurance, and food access.
- ▶ Some states have passed anti-discrimination protections for medical and recreational cannabis users, prohibiting employers from firing, demoting, or not hiring due to legal cannabis use.
- ▶ These bills permit legal cannabis use *outside* of work hours and prohibit cannabis consumption or intoxication during work hours. These bills also usually carve out exceptions for employers who must comply with drug-free workplace policies.
- ▶ Similar bills have been introduced in Maryland for many years but have not advanced out of committee i.e. [HB 1408 \(2025\)](#).

Cannabis Events

- ▶ Last year, SB 215/HB 132 initially proposed a cannabis events registration system.
- ▶ 5 states allow cannabis events (California, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, and New York).
- ▶ SB 215/HB 132 as initially proposed would have allowed three types of cannabis events: (1) consumption only events (2) cannabis beverages events (3) vendor sale events.
- ▶ Language regarding cannabis events was completely removed from SB 215/HB 132.

Upcoming LRC Events

Annual Conference: May 20 @ Maryland Carey Law

Regional Meetings 9:00–3:00

Jan. 15

Somerset

Kent

Queen Anne's

Caroline

Talbot

Dorchester

Wicomico

Worcester

Cecil

Feb. 5

Harford

Baltimore

St. Mary's

Anne Arundel

Prince George's

Calvert

Charles

Baltimore City

Mar. 26

Garrett

Allegany

Washington

Frederick

Carroll

Howard

Montgomery



THANK YOU

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