

2026 Maryland Legislative Session

Tobacco and Cannabis Legislative Summaries

TOBACCO

[SB 249](#) – Tobacco Product Licensees – Additional Licensure for Electronic Smoking Devices: PASSED

This bill requires businesses that manufacture, distribute, or sell electronic smoking devices to obtain a separate license for those activities, removing the prior rule that allowed cigarette or other tobacco product licensees to operate under their existing license. The bill allows current license holders to continue operating until their license expires and waives the additional license fee for retailers who already hold a cigarette or other tobacco products license. This law becomes effective on October 1, 2026.

[HB 918/SB 279](#) – Baltimore City – Tobacco and Electronic Smoking Devices – Local Laws Authorization and Enforcement: PASSED

This bill requires applicants in Baltimore City to obtain a local licensure authorization from the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore City before applying for an initial or renewal county license to sell cigarettes at retail, to act as an other tobacco products retailer or tobacconist, or to act as an electronic smoking devices retailer or vape shop vendor. The City may establish and charge a fee for licensure authorization requests, and 50% of those fees must be remitted to the Comptroller for distribution to the Family League of Baltimore City, Inc. The bill prohibits the issuance of licensure authorizations to new retailer applicants for one year, from October 1, 2026, through October 1, 2027. Additionally, the bill allows Baltimore City special enforcement officers to inspect the premises of license holders and enforce provisions regulating the sale and distribution

of cigarettes, other tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices. This law becomes effective on October 1, 2026.

[SB 623/HB 766](#) – Premium Cigar Lounge License (Maryland Premium Cigar Lounge Act of 2026): FAILED

As filed, this bill would have created a new type of liquor license, the premium cigar lounge license, limiting the number by county to one per every 150,000 residents, with a minimum of one license per county. Through an exception to the Clean Indoor Air Act, the bill would have allowed tobacconists that have no less than 70% of average daily receipts from the sale of premium cigars, pipe tobacco, and related accessories to permit on-site alcohol consumption where indoor smoking is permitted. Premium cigar lounge licensees could not be adjacent to health care or childcare facilities and would be required to submit a building plan, post signage that smoking is permitted, and have employees sign an acknowledgement that they will be exposed to secondhand smoke. The license would cost \$100 and the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission would maintain a registry of tobacconists that permit indoor smoking.

The Senate passed a [version of the bill](#) that included significant amendments, including expanding the number of licenses, exempting Montgomery County, increasing the license fee, creating opportunity for social equity applicants for licenses, prohibiting entry by anyone under age 21, prohibiting live entertainment, and establishing criteria liquor boards must consider. The House returned [a version of the bill](#) that stripped all substantive provisions and included only an extension of the moratorium on the issuance of alcoholic beverages licenses to tobacconists that expires on June 30, 2026. The Senate did not vote on the House version of the bill. As a result, no legislation passed.

[HB 1264/SB 798](#) – Public Health – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Tobacco Cessation: FAILED

This bill would have required the Maryland Medical Assistance Program (Medicaid) to cover individual and group counseling for tobacco cessation, subject to the State budget and federal law, and would have prohibited Medicaid and managed care organizations from requiring prior authorization for any product or service used to help individuals quit tobacco. These bills received hearings in the House Health Committee and Senate Finance Committee. Neither bill received a vote.

CANNABIS

[SB 54/HB 452](#) – State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners - Grounds for Disciplinary Action – Restrictions: PASSED

This bill prohibits the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners from taking disciplinary action against a licensed veterinarian on the sole basis of the licensee discussing or recommending the use of cannabis or cannabidiol (CBD) products on an animal for therapeutic or health supplementation purposes. These prohibited actions include:

- Suspending or revoking a license to practice
- Reprimanding or censuring
- Probation

This law becomes effective on October 1, 2026.

[SB 439/HB 797](#) – Employment Discrimination - Fire and Rescue Public Safety Employees - Use of Medical Cannabis: PASSED

This bill prohibits an employer from discriminating against a fire and rescue public safety employee based on an employee's possession of a valid written certification for medical cannabis, or an employee with such certification testing positive for cannabis components or metabolites. This bill prohibits employers from taking the following adverse actions:

- Disciplining, discharging, or otherwise discriminating against an employee with respect to compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment; or
- Limiting, segregating, or classifying its employees in any way that could deprive an employee of employment opportunity or otherwise negatively affect their status as an employee.

This prohibition does not prevent an employer from implementing policies and procedures that prohibit the impairment by or use of cannabis while on duty. It requires employers to report incidents of impairment to the State Emergency Medical Services Board.

Employers that would be in violation of federal law or regulations or would lose federal monetary or licensing-related benefits, are exempt from following this prohibition. This law becomes effective October 1, 2026.

[SB 594](#) – Cannabis - Advertising – Alterations: PASSED

This bill amends existing cannabis advertising restrictions to permit advertisements that indirectly target individuals under the age of 21, while retaining the prohibition on the use of elements in cannabis advertising that are attractive to individuals under the age of 21.

Additionally, this bill allows licensed cannabis dispensaries to use limited exterior signage, including a poster or placard attached to the exterior of the building, or freestanding signboard immediately adjacent to the entrance, for the purposes of providing contact information for the dispensary and for the Maryland Cannabis Administration, guidance on what to do in case of an adverse cannabis related incident, and information about the ownership status of the business.

This bill also requires the Maryland Cannabis Administration to accept the most recent available advertising audience composition data provided by the entity with which the licensed cannabis dispensaries advertises and establish by regulation at least one alternative method for determining audience composition.

Finally, this bill allows third-party usage of a licensed cannabis dispensary's distinct characteristics when such use is for non-commercial editorial purposes, and the dispensary has not provided remuneration or anything else of value in connection with the content.

This law becomes effective on July 1, 2026.

[HB 622](#) – Cannabis – Licensees – Dispensary Licenses, Micro Dispensary Employees, and Cannabis Agent Training Programs: PASSED

This bill increases the number of registered cannabis agents a licensed cannabis micro-dispensary may employ from 10 to 20. A cannabis agent is an employee or volunteer that works for a cannabis business.

Additionally, this bill requires an annual cannabis agent training program to provide a curriculum of relevant statutory and regulatory provisions, including:

- Administrative and criminal liability and licensing sanctions,
- Statutory and regulatory requirements for employees and owners,
- State and local licensing and enforcement, and

- Public health and safety standards relevant to their license type.

This training is required to be completed every 2 years, beginning within 90 days of the licensed registered cannabis agent's start date. This law becomes effective on July 1, 2026.

[SB 110/](#)[HB 114](#) – Motor Vehicles - Accidents - Required Testing for Impaired Driving (Mateo's Law): FAILED

This bill would have required any person involved in a motor vehicle accident resulting in the death of, or life-threatening injury to, another person to submit to breath and blood testing to determine drug or alcohol impairment. SB 110 did not receive a vote in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. Likewise, HB 114 did not receive a vote in the House Judiciary Committee.

[SB 1008](#) – Alcohol and Cannabis - Cannabinoid Beverages Off-Premises Sales Permit – Establishment: FAILED

This bill would have authorized the holder of an alcohol wholesaler's license to acquire cannabinoid beverages from a licensed cannabis processor and to deliver cannabinoid beverages to a holder of an alcohol beverage license with off-sale privileges. It would have allowed a holder of an alcohol beverage license with off-sale privileges to sell cannabinoid beverages if they had been issued a permit by a local licensing board. The bill transferred enforcement authority of cannabinoid beverages, defined as beverages containing 5 mg. or less of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), from the Maryland Cannabis Administration to the Alcohol Tobacco and Cannabis Commission when the beverages are acquired by a holder of an alcohol wholesaler's license.

SB 1008 was introduced late; it was voted out of the Senate Rules Committee to Senate Finance Committee, where it received a hearing but not a vote.

[HB 544](#) – Vehicle Laws - Cannabis Use in Motor Vehicle with Minor Occupant – Prohibition: FAILED

This bill would have prohibited the smoking, vaping, or consuming of cannabis in the passenger area of a vehicle when a minor is present. Violations of this provision would have resulted in a misdemeanor with a possible sentence of up to 1 year imprisonment, \$1,000 fine, or both.

This bill would have added to pre-existing penalties existing for drivers who are consuming cannabis while operating a motor vehicle and passengers smoking cannabis in the passenger area of a motor vehicle. HB 544 did not receive a vote in the House Judiciary Committee.

[HB 1519](#) – Cannabis - Management Service Agreements, Advertising, and Penalties - Alterations (Cannabis Reform and Opportunity Act): FAILED

This bill would have repealed the prohibition on outdoor cannabis advertising, allowing such advertisements, including billboards, anywhere except within 500 feet of the following designated areas:

- Primary or secondary schools;
- Licensed childcare centers or registered family childcare homes;
- Playgrounds, recreational centers, libraries, or public parks;
- Places of worship; and
- Facilities that provide substance use treatment.

The bill also added a definition for therapeutic or medical claims that covered only explicit claims, rather than implicit. It would have removed prohibitions on advertisements that indirectly targeted or were attractive to minors. The removal of indirect advertising towards individuals under the age of 21 mirrored language that was enacted in SB 594. HB 1519 did not receive a vote in the House Economic Matters Committee.

[HB 1643](#) – Employment Discrimination - School Employees - Use of Cannabis: FAILED

This bill would have prohibited employers from discriminating against a school employee or applicant for employment based on their legal use of cannabis. The bill protected the legal use of cannabis only while outside of work hours, off school premises, and not using school equipment or property. Employers would be prohibited from:

- Failing or refusing to hire an applicant;
- Discriminating against an employee with respect to their compensation or terms of employment; and
- Limiting, segregating, or classifying an employee or applicant in any way that could deprive them of employment opportunities.

This bill would not authorize use, possession, or impairment of cannabis during work hours, nor would it prevent employers from adopting policies that prohibit such actions. It did not require violation of federal law or preempt any federal law requiring drug testing as a condition of federal employment, funding, or contracting. HB 1643 was introduced late and did not receive a hearing in the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee.