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## **Budtender Penalty Reform Passes State Legislature**

*Intentional sale of cannabis to minors remains a felony, unintentional sale now a misdemeanor*

WASHINGTON – Today the Washington CannaBusiness Association thanked the Washington State Senate for its 28-17 vote adopting new criminal penalties for the unintentional sale of cannabis to minors by budtenders working in a licensed cannabis retail store. The intentional sale of cannabis to a minor by an employee will remain a felony, while the unintentional sale of cannabis to a minor will be re-classified as a misdemeanor. The new charging practice brings the cannabis industry into alignment with similar penalties for the sale of alcohol to a minor.

The legislation – sponsored by Representatives Pettigrew and Appleton – previously earned support in the House of Representatives with a bipartisan vote of 89-9. The bill will return to the House for a concurrence vote before heading to Governor Inslee’s desk for his signature.

The cannabis industry comprises more than 10,000 jobs in Washington State, contributing more than \$1 billion in state taxes for priorities such as education and public safety.

“A felony leaves a permanent mark on a person’s life – severely altering their future opportunities. The Legislature has demonstrated real leadership by bringing cannabis penalties into alignment with the alcohol/spirits industry by re-classifying the unintentional sale of product to a minor,” said Vicki Christophersen, executive director of the Washington CannaBusiness Association. “The intentional sale of product to a minor will – and should – remain a felony crime. But this new criminal classification brings a new level of fairness for those working in the cannabis industry and we thank Representatives Pettigrew and Appleton for their leadership this year to fix this significant disparity in penalties.”

The reclassification of an unintentional sale of cannabis to a minor from a felony into a misdemeanor has long been a priority for social justice and cannabis activists. The Washington CannaBusiness Association is proud to have played a leading role in successfully advocating for passage of this bill. Due to the varying practices of

jurisdictions across the state, there is no firm data criminal prosecution for sale to minors. However, WACA's retail members have been consistent in the negative impact of the discrepancy on their employees.

**About Washington CannaBusiness Association**

Washington CannaBusiness Association solely represents Washington's licensed and regulated cannabis businesses and provides its members with general support and representation before regulatory agencies and the legislature. As an association of cannabis producers, processors and retailers who have gathered to promote the private cannabis industry created by Initiative 502 and our member companies, our mission is to advocate on behalf of our member companies in the legislative, regulatory, legal and public policy arenas.

Learn more about Washington CannaBusiness Association by visiting our website at <http://www.wacannabusiness.org>

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