



Joint Commission to Oversee the Transition of the Commonwealth into a Cannabis Retail Market

September 21, 2026, at 3:00 p.m.

Senate Room C

<https://studies.virginiageneralassembly.gov/studies/774>

The Joint Commission to Oversee the Transition of the Commonwealth into a Cannabis Retail Market (the Joint Commission) met on September 21, 2026. Senator Lashrecse D. Aird (chair) presided over the meeting.¹ The meeting began with opening remarks from the chair, followed by presentations and discussion. Materials presented at the meeting are accessible through the [*Joint Commission's meetings webpage*](#).

Presentation: Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority Enforcement Structure

Thomas "Tom" Kirby, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority

Mr. Kirby provided an overview of recent actions taken by the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority (the Authority) related to retail tobacco permitting. He explained the requirements to obtain a retail tobacco permit and the training requirements for retail dealers related to (i) the Cannabis Control Act, (ii) prohibitions on the sale of retail tobacco products or hemp products intended for smoking to persons younger than 21 years of age, (iii) forms of acceptable identification for purchase of such products, and (iv) penalties that may be imposed for violations of such laws or provisions. He highlighted the Authority's outreach efforts to educate current and potential licensees on the new processes and laws related to retail tobacco products. Lastly, he provided data on the permitting efforts, including the number and status of applications, locations and types of outreach efforts, the "vape" product directory, and the Authority's next steps related to retail tobacco permitting.

Presentation: Potential Impacts of Increased Public Consumption Penalty

Valerie Slater, Esq., Executive Director, Rise for Youth

Ms. Slater presented on the financial, legal, educational, public health, and racial-equity impacts of the new public consumption penalty, which is set to increase on July 1, 2027, from a civil penalty of no more than \$25 for a first or second offense and of \$25 for a second offense to \$250, respectively. She provided data on the rise of marijuana-related complaints originating in schools and the decrease of complaints from law-enforcement community referrals, as well as the age and racial makeup of such complaints. She highlighted the need for data-driven research to validate an increased civil penalty and provided four requests to the Joint Commission: (i) dedicate 30 percent of all tax revenue generated by the adult-use retail market to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services; (ii) adopt Stanford Medicine's K-12 cannabis

¹ **Members Present:** Senator Lashrecse D. Aird (chair), Delegate Paul E. Krizek (vice-chair), Senator Saddam Azlan Salim, Senator Schuyler T. VanValkenburg, Delegate Katrina E. Callsen, Delegate Rae Cousins, Delegate Marcia "Cia" S. Price

Members Absent: Senator Emily M. Jordan, Delegate Hyland F. "Buddy" Fowler, Jr., Delegate James W. Morefield

education curriculum; (iii) remove delinquency treatment and exempt minors from the public consumption penalty; and (iv) remove all criminal penalties for marijuana offenses committed by youth related to possession and consumption, no matter where the conduct occurs.

Presentation: Overview of Enforcement Provisions

Stephen Kindermann, Lead Senior Legislative Counsel, Division of Legislative Services

Troy Hatcher, Legislative Counsel, Division of Legislative Services

Mr. Kindermann and Mr. Hatcher provided a presentation on the Cannabis Control Act's enforcement provisions. These include statutory provisions on (i) requirements, disqualifications, and prohibited actions of the Cannabis Control Authority (the CCA) Board members and its Chief Executive Officer; (ii) enforcement duties of the Chief Executive Officer or appointed investigators; (iii) local ordinances regulating the sale of marijuana or marijuana products; (iv) privileges, liability, and prohibited actions of licensees; (v) criminal and civil penalties related to (a) possession, use, and consumption of marijuana or marijuana products, (b) sale of and advertising restrictions for such products, and (c) illegal actions related to such products for persons not licensed by the CCA; and (vi) taxation of such products.

Mr. Kindermann and Mr. Hatcher noted that (1) the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority (the Authority) and the CCA, in coordination with the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, are required to provide an enforcement plan for the roles of the Authority and CCA for the cannabis retail market by July 1, 2027; (2) the Authority and CCA shall execute a memorandum of understanding for enforcement by March 1, 2027, which shall expire by March 1, 2029; and (3) the Joint Commission shall make recommendations on the benefits, limitations, and feasibility of the Authority's involvement in enforcement of laws and regulations related to the cannabis retail market by November 1, 2027.

Presentation: Cannabis Statute Enforcement Data

Jody Fridley, Director, Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission

Mr. Fridley provided data on marijuana offense trends from general district and circuit courts from 2010 to 2026 and from juvenile and domestic relations district courts from 2021 to 2025 related to juveniles. This data included marijuana possession and distribution charges, as well as other charges such as transportation and driving under the influence of marijuana. He also provided data on the number of marijuana convictions. For juveniles, he provided data on charges such as underage possession, use in public, use on school property, and driving under the influence and the accompanying conviction/adjudication data. Lastly, he provided data on the number of sentencing guidelines received from 2007 to 2026 for marijuana convictions.

Public Comment

Members of the public were given a chance to speak regarding the information presented.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Joint Commission was not set.



For more information, see the [*Joint Commission's website*](#) or contact the Division of Legislative Services staff:

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