

Marijuana lounges could be next for Oregon

By **PARIS ACHEN**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Smoking lounges could still be the next trend for Oregon's recreational marijuana market, under a controversial Senate bill in the Legislature's Joint Committee on Marijuana Regulation.

Proponents say cannabis smoking lounges would stimulate tourism and give renters a place to legally smoke.

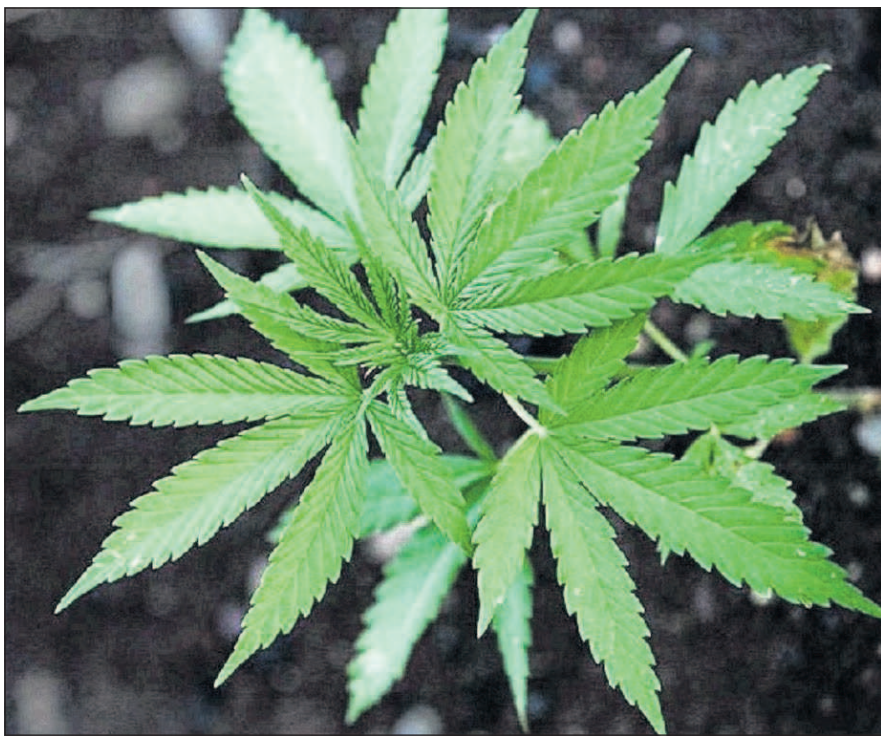
The recreational marijuana law, passed by voters in 2014, has created a conundrum for renters and tourists, proponents say.

The law prohibits public consumption of marijuana but allows it in a private residence. If a landlord prohibits marijuana use at a rental unit, or if someone is visiting the state, some renters and tourists may have no legal place to consume the drug.

"In reality, this restriction has made the legal consumption of cannabis impossible for many Oregonians who do not own their primary residence, live with small children or those who live in government housing. As a result, many otherwise responsible adults are left no other choice but to smoke or vaporize cannabis in public, on sidewalks, in parks, in cars," said Sam Chapman, founder of Portland-based New Economy Consulting, which advises cannabis entrepreneurs and investors.

Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, D-Beaverton, testified that even with marijuana legalization, minorities have been prosecuted disproportionately for using marijuana illegally in public. Allowing smoking lounges also would help address that social injustice, she said.

Opposition to the bill led to the formation of a committee workgroup that tried to address concerns by public health officials that the lounges could normalize marijuana smoking for young



Pamplin Media Group

A Senate bill would allow smoking lounges to provide a legal venue for renters and tourists to consume marijuana.

people and pollute indoor air.

The workgroup proposed a rule Tuesday that would require the lounges to be located on outdoor patios screened from public view and would eliminate a provision to allow members of the cannabis industry to obtain licenses to hold temporary events where attendees could consume cannabis. Cities and counties also would have to opt in to allow the licenses for the lounges.

Despite the concessions, public health officials continued to express their opposition to the bill during a hearing at the Capitol Tuesday, May 16.

"The harms of secondhand tobacco smoke are well-known, and secondhand marijuana smoke is also harmful," said Katrina Hedberg, state health officer

and state epidemiologist at the Oregon Health Authority.

Like tobacco, marijuana smoke contains cancer-causing chemicals and poses a risk to those exposed to it, she said.

"By allowing for the social consumption of cannabis, Oregon risks the rollback of years of progress related to social norms around smoking," she said.

Even if smoking areas are screened, minors will still be able to smell marijuana smoke wafting from lounges. She said studies show that communities that have hooka lounges have a higher prevalence of smoking among youth.

"Social normalization does affect youth so we are very concerned about that," she said.

Oregon official sounds alarm over Medicaid eligibility

By **ANDREW SELSKY**
Associated Press

SALEM — Some 86,000 people who are receiving Medicaid benefits in Oregon may be ineligible, costing \$37 million per month, the secretary of state said Wednesday.

In an "audit alert," Dennis Richardson said Wednesday they have not undergone federally required annual benefit eligibility determinations, and represent 8 percent of the state's entire Medicaid population.

Rep. Dan Rayfield, a Democrat from Corvallis, said Medicaid enrollment data should be cleaned up and eligibility issues fixed. But Rayfield also said "political ploys aimed at grabbing headlines before full information is available" are unhelpful.

Richardson said his audit alerts highlight urgent concerns. Before the Republican was elected in November to the state's second-highest office, he said in an interview with The Associated Press that being chief auditor of the state would be his most important task. He said some other misspending by the state in big-ticket items had not been audited.

"To make good on my promise to increase transparency and accountability, I am instituting Audit Alerts," Richardson said in a statement Wednesday. "These alerts will highlight concerns that are too urgent to be delayed until an audit's completion."

The Oregon Health Authority, which administers Medicaid in the state,

said all recipients have been deemed eligible at some point in time. In a statement, the health authority said it is finishing by May 31 an analysis to determine how many Oregonians still need to go through the redetermination process to ensure they remain eligible for Medicaid benefits.

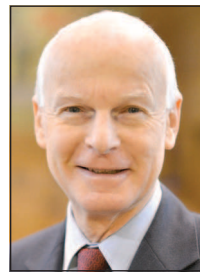
"It is important to understand that just because a redetermination is not complete, does not indicate that they are ineligible for Medicaid," the health authority said.

Richardson said his auditors recently discovered that for the past three years, the Oregon Health Authority has spent what may total hundreds of millions of state and federal dollars providing benefits for ineligible recipients. At an average monthly cost of \$430 per person, coverage for the 86,000 people costs about \$37 million per month.

The Senate Republican Office in the Democrat-dominated Legislature called the situation a "Medicaid fiasco." Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli, of John Day, called for a bipartisan inquiry.

Medicaid is a program created by the federal government, and administered by the state, to provide payment for medical services for low-income citizens.

The secretary of state's office recommend the Oregon Health Authority work with the federal regulatory authorities to ensure federal Medicaid funding is not jeopardized while OHA resolves these issues, and that the Legislature require the health authority to report on progress by Sept. 30.



Richardson

Equal pay bill lets some workers recover back wages

By **PARIS ACHEN**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The Oregon Senate has unanimously passed an equal pay bill that allows workers to recover up to two years' of back pay by filing a complaint with the Bureau of Labor and Industries.

Senators amended the House bill to win support from the business community, which had previously opposed stiff penalties in the original bill.

"It is currently illegal in Oregon to pay someone differently for the same work," said Sen. Kathleen Taylor, D-Portland. "Our current legal system is not working. We know far

too many people are being paid less for the same work."

The safeguard applies to women and all other protected classes, including minorities, older people and people with disabilities. The bill also prohibits employers from asking a job candidate for wage or salary history.

Sens. Taylor, a Democrat, and Tim Knopp, R-Bend, championed the House bill in the Senate and convened business and advocates groups to make several changes in the legislation.

The amendment provides a phased-in effective date and removes punitive damages when employers can show they have conducted a pay equity

analysis in the past three years and made progress toward equal pay.

Another concession allows unequal pay when the inequity results from an employer paying a worker more to match another employer's offer, said Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose.

Knopp called the bipartisan bill a "historic agreement" and a step toward closing the wage gap, which so far has remained elusive since women joined the workforce.

The House passed the original bill March 28 by a 36-24 vote, but must now consider the Senate's changes.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.



At the Capitol

Corrections

The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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AccuWeather.com Forecast

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly sunny	Mostly sunny and nice	Pleasant with sunshine	Pleasant with sunshine	Mostly sunny

PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

66°	45°	73°	50°	73°	50°	75°	50°	81°	53°
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HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

73°	45°	79°	51°	79°	51°	84°	52°	88°	57°
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ALMANAC

PENDLETON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	58°	39°
Normals	71°	47°
Records	97° (2008)	33° (1917)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. Trace
Month to date 0.92"
Normal month to date 0.66"
Year to date 9.13"
Last year to date 5.29"
Normal year to date 5.77"

HERMISTON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	68°	42°
Normals	73°	47°
Records	95° (2008)	34° (1943)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. Trace
Month to date 0.43"
Normal month to date 0.62"
Year to date 6.31"
Last year to date 4.20"
Normal year to date 4.61"

SUN AND MOON

	Last	New	First	Full
Sunrise today		5:21 a.m.		
Sunset tonight		8:23 p.m.		
Moonrise today		1:38 a.m.		
Moonset today		12:04 p.m.		

REGIONAL FORECAST

Coastal Oregon: Partly sunny today. Partly cloudy tonight. Sunny to partly cloudy tomorrow.

Eastern and Central Oregon: Warmer today with periods of clouds and sunshine; a shower in spots in the south.

Western Washington: A blend of sun and clouds today. Patchy clouds tonight.

Eastern Washington: Periods of sun today; a passing shower in the north. Partly cloudy tonight.

Cascades: Partly sunny and milder today. Partly cloudy tonight. Mostly sunny tomorrow.

Northern California: Mostly sunny today. Not as cold in the interior mountains; pleasant in central parts.

REGIONAL CITIES

	Today			Fri.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	62	47	pc	63	50	s
Baker City	61	33	pc	68	35	s
Bend	65	37	pc	72	42	s
Brookings	61	48	pc	65	51	s
Burns	62	33	pc	70	36	s
Enterprise	56	35	c	65	38	s
Eugene	71	43	pc	77	46	s
Heppner	65	40	pc	71	45	s
Hermiston	73	45	pc	79	51	s
John Day	63	40	pc	71	42	s
Klamath Falls	68	35	s	75	40	s
La Grande	60	38	pc	69	41	s
Meacham	58	35	pc	66	39	s
Medford	77	47	s	84	51	s
Newport	58	45	pc	59	48	s
North Bend	62	47	pc	63	50	s
Ontario	69	45	c	75	47	s
Pasco	74	45	pc	79	49	s
Pendleton	66	45	pc	73	50	s
Portland	69	50	pc	76	52	s
Redmond	69	34	pc	75	39	s
Salem	71	46	pc	77	49	s
Spokane	64	45	pc	69	49	s
Ukiah	60	34	pc	67	38	s
Vancouver	67	48	pc	75	50	s
Walla Walla	68	49	pc	75	54	s
Yakima	75	45	pc	79	49	s

WORLD CITIES

	Today			Fri.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	99	67	s	101	68	pc
Hong Kong	83	76	c	82	78	r
Jerusalem	85	66	s	79	58	s
London	64	51	pc	61	48	t
Mexico City	84	59	pc	86	58	pc
Moscow	64	45	pc	67	48	pc
Paris	65	48	r	60	47	t
Rome	79	59	pc	76	56	t
Seoul	78	55	s	77	55	s
Sydney	70	62	pc	70	61	r
Tokyo	73	61	pc	75	65	pc

WINDS

(in mph)	Today	Friday
Boardman	WSW 4-8	SSW 3-6
Pendleton	WNW 4-8	NNW 4-8

UV INDEX TODAY

1 4 7 6 4 1

8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m. 6 p.m.
0-2, Low 3-5, Moderate 6-7, High; 8-10, Very High; 11+, Extreme

The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.

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NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

National Summary: Sunshine and heat will hold in the East, while snow falls on the Rockies today. Storms will stretch from the Great Lakes to Texas with tornadoes over the southern Plains. The West Coast will be dry.

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 99° in Tampa, Fla. **Low 18°** in Crater Lake, Ore.

NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Fri.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Albuquerque	67	41	pc	64	44	s
Atlanta	87	68	t	89	68	pc
Atlanta City	79	67	s	80	57	pc
Baltimore	92	69	s	88	55	t
Billings	53	37	r	59	39	pc
Birmingham	87	69	pc	90	70	pc
Boise	64	43	c	70	47	s
Boston	92	67	s	80	51	pc
Charleston, SC	86	66	pc	86	66	pc
Chicago	80	43	c	82	63	t
Cleveland	87	55	t	61	49	pc
Dallas	90	71	t	87	71	t
Denver	44	31	r	43	28	sn
Detroit	87	48	t	65	47	pc
El Paso	83	59	s	83	55	s
Fairbanks	61	42	pc	62	44	pc
Fargo	65	36	pc	65	41	pc
Honolulu	85	71	sh	86	71	sh
Houston	89	75	pc	89	75	pc
Indianapolis	84	59	pc	76	61	t
Jacksonville	87	64	pc	88	68	pc
Kansas City	78	58	t	74	58	t
Las Vegas	80	60	s	83	64	s
Little Rock	81	69	pc	84	70	t
Los Angeles	75	57	s	82	60	s
Louisville	86	70	pc	83	69	t
Memphis	87	72	pc	87	72	t
Miami	88	79	sh	89	80	sh
Millwaukee	70	42	r	52	46	c
Minneapolis	57	42	sh	59	45	sh
Nashville	89	69	pc	88	69</	