

## [A Moment with Moffat](#)

Readers of *Motif* might recognize the name Jared Moffat, a longtime leader of cannabis legalization efforts and Regulate RI before he moved out of the country a few years ago. Moffat is considering a move back to Rhody, but even from far away he remains up-to-date on our state's high moves on legalization, and he'll be helping out with cannabis legislation for the remainder of the current session.

"The governor's proposal is our best chance at legalization," said Moffat. He said that it isn't how he would choose to write it, but Raimondo including it in her budget makes it difficult to state lawmakers to take it out because they'd have to find the revenue it's expected to bring in from somewhere else. Moffat wants to focus on "creating an appetite for amendments, and move the current legislation forward."

But what amendments? They fall into two broad categories. The first is home cultivation. Moffat has concerns that banning home-cultivation would reproduce conditions similar to those under prohibition. "We let people brew at home for beer and distill small batches of certain spirits," says Moffat. "Why not treat cannabis the same?" Anyone currently with a license to cultivate cannabis at home would have to demonstrate need under the Raimondo administration's current proposal. The definition of "need" is vague and could be applied broadly.

Moffat also would like to see amendments that address historical and current social inequities. There is currently no language that addresses issues of social justice. "We would like to see someone with a prior related to cannabis have their record expunged, except in DUI cases," says Moffat. "Everyone deserves a clean slate."

# the front

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## CREATING EQUITY FOR THE HARMED

ON MARCH 1, REP. **MARCIA RANGLIN-VASSELL** (District 5, PVD) introduced a bill into the House Finance Committee: H.5795, **The Rhode Island Cannabis Equity Act**. The act creates a cannabis equity program, with the state providing financial and technical access into the (hopefully soon to be legal) cannabis industry. Funds will be disbursed on a municipal level and will have oversight by a board appointed by General Assembly leadership.

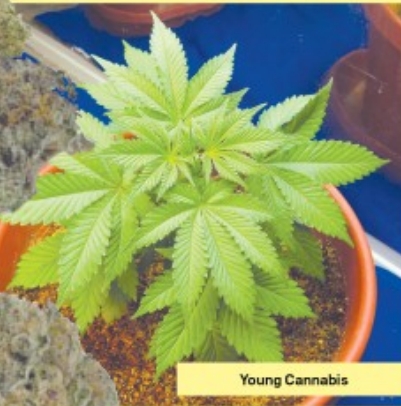
"The bill is a response to the governor's budget," says Ranglin-Vassell. "I haven't seen anything that says it's going to be fair to communities that have been harmed [by cannabis prohibition]." She'd like to see tax money from cannabis revenues go into divergent programs, such as putting them toward ailing schools in urban areas.

Toward this fairness goal, the bill includes an **expungement** section.

Any individual applying for a loan who has a prior conviction for a cannabis offense that is no longer illegal can have their record expunged. Essentially, felony or misdemeanor possession convictions would be wiped. Ranglin-Vassell wants to ensure that a prior criminal record for breaking laws that unfairly targeted

some minority populations cannot be used as an excuse to bar people from entry into a newly created legal market.

Ranglin-Vassell has been hosting meetings about cannabis legislation in the community. She describes them more as strategy sessions, training people on how to advocate both for legalization laws and for communities harmed by prohibition. The next one is on April 22 at 6pm at the United Way of Rhode Island. - Rob Smith



Young Cannabis

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## WHY SO BLUE?

Mark your calendars – the **GREAT AMERICAN HEMP AND BLUES FESTIVAL** is just a few months away! On July 10, this music extravaganja will take over the Earth Ballroom at Mohegan Sun in Uncasville, Conn. Headlining the event is Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame 2019 inductee James Montgomery, who will share the stage with folk rock, reggae, country and blues bands. But this all-day event isn't limited just to musical entertainment. There also will be speakers, vendors and artisans selling their wares. For tickets and information, go to [thegreatamericanhempandbluesfest.com](http://thegreatamericanhempandbluesfest.com)