

May 2025

Dear Friends and Supporters,

The Legislative session is winding down. It will be virtually over before you receive this newsletter. We will have more up-to-date final information later.

Only one serious gambling bill was filed this year. It was to expand gambling in Greene County from pari-mutuel wagering, which was already authorized there. This month's Educational Update is the memorandum we provided to members of the Senate and House. The bill passed the Senate by a 15 to 2 vote. Apparently, it caught Senators off guard. However, we requested a public hearing in the house committee and presented oral testimony along the lines the memorandum provided. That memorandum is our Educational Update this month. The bill was not approved by the committee and died there.

Marijuana became an issue in the last part of the session. In total, there were four bills, two of which would regulate the sale of low dose THC (the psychoactive ingredient) and two bills that would prohibit the sale altogether. Presently, this version of the drug is being sold in convenience stores to all ages.

The regulatory bills would permit the products to be sold to anyone 21 years of age or older. We could not support those. We saw that as an incremental step in finally approving at a future date unlimited recreational Marijuana. At this writing, the final status of those bills is not known. What we do know is that Marijuana advocates will not give up. Like gambling, the issue requires constant vigilance.

While these Marijuana issues were still under consideration, the Alabama Court of Civil Appeals handed down an Opinion on April 25, 2025, holding the Alabama Department of Public Health may prohibit the sale of the Marijuana "food" products. The holding itself would not stop the sales since only one producer was involved. There is likely to be an appeal to the Alabama Supreme Court and further action. We will explain this in more detail after the Session.

Thank you for your continuing support. With personal regards, I am,

Yours very truly,

A. Eric Johnston

AEJ/pkh