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Tensions rise in cannabis industry over permit limit

Push to raise ownership cap on total dispensaries concerns smaller stores

By Diti Kohli
GLOBE STAFF

When recreational cannabis became legal in Massachusetts in 2016, the state imposed strict limits on how big any given retailer could be. The thinking went that capping the number of dispensaries any single business could own at three would keep large retail chains from dominating the market, leaving more opportunities for entrepreneurs in communities battered by the war on drugs to attain generational wealth.

Now there is talk of relaxing that limit. And it has sparked unprecedented tension within the industry.

On one side are operators who believe the three-license cap has stymied opportunities for struggling retailers to expand or sell their businesses to larger operators and exit with cash in hand. On the other are those who worry tweaking the limits would open the door for multi-state marijuana corporations to dominate the market, creating a cannabis oligopoly and putting minority business owners at a disadvantage.

“It’s not a consensus issue for the industry to raise the cap,” said David O’Brien, president of the 65-member Massachusetts Cannabis Business Association. “Some smaller companies fear it, because they think it’ll give more power to larger companies. Others want it.”

That divide is one reason the cap appears unlikely to change. **CANNABIS, Page A7**

N.H. teacher fired over aiding abortion access

After calling in sick, she secretly helped student, investigators concluded

By Steven Porter
GLOBE STAFF

A teacher was fired in New Hampshire after investigators concluded she secretly escorted a pregnant student to a medical appointment during the school day, ostensibly to access abortion services.

The teacher admitted to her employer that she had lied about having food poisoning when she called in sick from work and drove the student to the medical facility, according to records obtained by The Boston Globe through a public records request. State officials then opened an investigation into her alleged failure to observe appropriate boundaries with the student.

The information substantiates an eye-catching allegation that New Hampshire’s education commissioner, Frank Edelblut, publicized in an op-ed in April as he defended his approach to leadership and accountability. To illustrate controversies that would warrant investigations by the New Hampshire Department of Education, he rattled off a list of examples.

“How should the department respond when a parent has reached out to express concern that a child is being sexually abused?” Edelblut wrote. “The answer is to investigate.” **TEACHER, Page A10**

For new UMass leader, harsh lessons

After rapid clearing of protesters, Reyes faces prolonged struggle to regain support

By Daniel Kool
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Javier Reyes spent his first few months as chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Amherst walking the campus, dropping into department discussions, meeting pro-

fessors for coffee. When he landed last July, he’d resolved to get to know the campus community before shaping any big plans.

“I told everyone: You’re going to have to wait a year,” Reyes, 49, said in an interview. “We’re going to lis-

ten first, we’re going to put it all together.”

Nearly one year in, some critics question whether Reyes was listening closely enough.

As students departed for the summer, the campus was still convulsing from the arrest of 134 people, including students, involved with a pro-Palestinian encampment this spring. The arrests and disman-

tlings of the camp were conducted by more than 200 campus, state, and local police officers — a sweep that Reyes signed off on just hours after the tents went up.

Students and the faculty senate took votes of no confidence in him. Hundreds of faculty and staff signed an open letter calling for his resignation, and the main commencement ceremony was postponed. **REYES, Page A7**



‘I think he will be successful [at the debate] because people have traditionally, even decades ago, underestimated Joe Biden.’

SENATOR CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, a Democrat, on the president



‘Crooked Joe Biden is the WORST debater I have ever faced. He can’t put two sentences together!’

DONALD TRUMP

AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES FILES

The two rivals for president will once again square off in a debate this Thursday on CNN.

TRUMP’S TRASH TALKING SETS STAGE FOR BIDEN

Barbs could provide opportunities for president in first 2024 debate

By Jim Puzzanghera
GLOBE STAFF

WASHINGTON — When Donald Trump agreed to President Biden’s proposal for two debates — the first coming on Thursday night — he immediately began to predict how his rival would perform. And while candidates often try to set high expectations for their opponents, to make it tough to exceed them, Trump went low. Extremely low.

“Crooked Joe Biden is the WORST debater I have ever faced,” Trump wrote on Truth Social on May 15 in accepting the debate plan. “He can’t put two sentences together!”

Trump and his allies have continued to hammer away at Biden’s mental acuity, including circulating misleading video clips purporting to show the president wandering aimlessly at a gathering of world leaders and having to be led around at recent events. The strategy builds off months of Republican

mockery designed to amplify voter concerns in polls that Biden, 81, the oldest president ever, isn’t as capable of serving another term as Trump, who is just three years younger.

But the tactic carries a major risk. Setting the bar so low for Biden means he could clear it simply by finding his way on and off the CNN debate stage and answering questions coherently.

“It’s kind of a gamble,” acknowledged Biden. **DEBATE, Page A6**

Cambridge considers funding local news

Controversial proposal would see taxpayer funds spent on journalism

By Spencer Buell
GLOBE STAFF

CAMBRIDGE — It’s not breaking news that local media outlets are struggling right now.

Certainly not to Marc Levy, the founder, publisher, and primary author of Cambridge Day, the news site he has run here on and off since 2005.

Advertising has dried up. So has readers’ willingness to pay. A GoFundMe campaign last year helped keep his operation afloat, and he is pursuing a conversion to nonprofit status. But despite spending nearly every day covering as much news as he can — and managing a stable of both freelancers and unpaid citizen journalists — he says he does not pay himself a salary and can’t do nearly as much coverage as he believes his city of 120,000 needs.

“I think Cambridge deserves better,” Levy said.

Now, a new, untested, and controversial strategy has emerged that might help Levy, and other upstart local journalism operations like his: turning not just to readers, or to donors, but to the city. **CAMBRIDGE, Page A10**



DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF/FILE

Newspaper boxes at Porter Square in 2001. The City Council has pointed to the role the press plays in keeping residents informed.



You sayin’ bolt?

Monday: Possible lightning. High 82-87, low 64-69.

Tuesday: Drier, warmer. High 86-91, low 68-73.

Sunrise: 5:08. Sunset: 8:25.

Weather and comics, **D4-5**.

Obituaries, **C10**.

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After a Senate Republican blocked debate at the State House on sweeping climate legislation, Democratic leaders cobbled together an agreement to ensure other major bills are not similarly slowed. **B1**.

Home staging has become an essential part of the real estate industry as agents seek quick sales and top dollar. **D1**.

The death toll from the recent Muslim pilgrimage to the Hajj continued to rise, as officials say the heat killed more than 1,300 participants. **A4**.

The Red Sox used eight pitchers to dispatch the Reds, winning their seventh out of the last eight games. **C1**.

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