

The Boston Globe

Serving our community since 1872

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2026

SOAR SPOT



PHOTOS BY JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF

This past weekend, 55 ski jumpers took part in the 104th Harris Hill Ski Jump competition in Brattleboro, Vt. Clockwise from top, the crowd watched as Christian Friberg of the St. Paul Ski Club took off; coach Colin Delaney lifted a jumper to demonstrate proper form; and skiers joked with a coach who was watching on a raised platform. **B4.**

Mass. pot businesses fall short on equity

By Katie Johnston

GLOBE STAFF

When recreational marijuana was legalized in Massachusetts, making the industry equitable was front and center. Groundbreaking programs were put in place to help communities disproportionately harmed by the war on drugs benefit from legal weed, and many thought those efforts would lead to major windfalls.

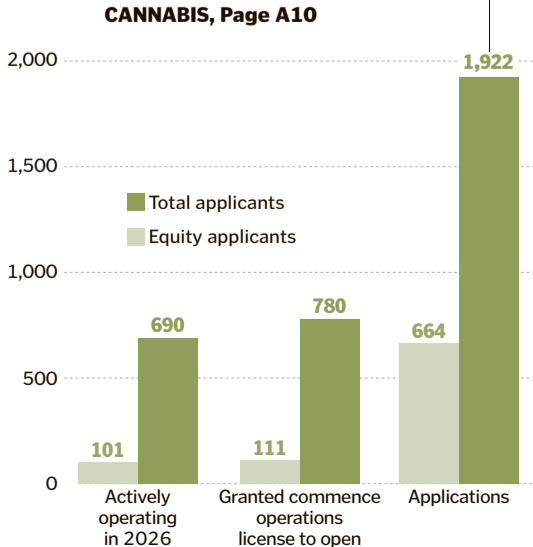
More than seven years later, however — as a ballot measure to kill recreational marijuana works its way toward voters in November — these progressive reforms have not led to the economic justice many had hoped for.

Of 690 open cannabis businesses, a Globe analysis found, about 15 percent — 101 — are owned by people in the state's two primary equity programs, aimed at entrepreneurs and workers in the largely Black and Latino communities targeted by drug arrests, as well as those

Equity programs have led to more than 100 cannabis licenses in state

The equity data includes economic empowerment licenses granted in 2018, as well as those issued to participants in the social equity program, which is ongoing. The data is up to date as of Feb. 12.

SOURCE: Cannabis Control Commission
DANA GERBER/
GLOBE STAFF



CANNABIS, Page A10

Neighbors call for city to get tougher on Mass. and Cass

Drug users would be offered detox or face charges

By Chris Serres

GLOBE STAFF

Their patience long since worn thin, residents and businesses near the troubled crossroads of Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard pressed City Hall on Wednesday to take a much tougher tack on drug use and homelessness, including the deployment of specialized police officers who would direct people into treatment and long-term recovery.

The new strategy proposed by neighborhood and business groups calls for ramped-up en-

forcement and expanded outreach in the area known as Mass. and Cass by the Boston Police Department, the creation of a specialty court for those arrested for drug crimes, and the pressuring of people into treatment. Under the proposal, people found to be using drugs illegally on the streets at Mass. and Cass would be offered an ultimatum: Either accept placement into a drug detox program or face criminal charges.

The proposal, which is supported by a coalition of South End neighborhood groups and

NEIGHBORHOOD, Page A7

Local police caught in the middle on ICE

Authority unclear in dealings with federal agents

By Lea Skene

GLOBE STAFF

The directives from local leaders were clear, laid out in executive orders: Immigration agents are largely banned from municipal property. And first responders have a duty to document potential miscon-

duct involving federal agents.

But already, some law enforcement leaders are expressing concern about whether the orders are asking too much of local police.

It's the latest source of frustration from municipal law enforcement agencies as the Trump administration's immigration crackdown poses new challenges for officers, who often find themselves caught between the federal government

and the residents they've pledged to protect and serve.

Leaders of Boston and five nearby cities announced the executive orders earlier this month, seeking to limit the authority of Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials amid President Trump's mass deportation agenda.

The directives could endanger local police, creating conflict with federal agents and

POLICE, Page A5

Moderna wins battle but war goes on

In reversal, FDA agrees to review flu vaccine; politics now a key factor

By Tal Kopan and Jonathan Saltzman

GLOBE STAFF

The whiplash over a new potential flu vaccine from Moderna, which went from rejected to approved for review in a matter of days, has illustrated a new reality plaguing the Cambridge biotech company and other vaccine makers: Political headwinds are now an unavoidable and unpredictable factor in their business model.

On Wednesday the Food and Drug Administration announced it would review Moderna's application for a new mRNA flu vaccine for older adults, a huge reprieve for the company after the agency only two weeks ago rejected it.

But that initial rejection, and the firestorm it ignited, has only served to highlight the perilous environment Moderna and other vaccine makers find themselves in as key players in the administration continue to scrutinize vaccines, and in particular the messenger RNA vaccines in which Moderna specializes.

"There's no question that the politics of vaccines and the opinions of people in key positions . . . are influencing the outcomes of FDA decisions," said Chris Meekins, a health care policy analyst at the investment firm Raymond James and former health official in

MODERNA, Page A10

Unarmed, he took on R.I. gunman hand to hand

Bystander able to jam weapon, stop attack

By Christopher Gavin

GLOBE STAFF

PROVIDENCE — Two loud pops.

At first, from his seat high in the bleachers during Monday's high school hockey game at Dennis M. Lynch Arena in Pawtucket, Michael Black thought he heard balloons popping, right in front of him.

Then, another pop, and a grim reality set in: Through the crowd, Black saw a hand on a gun.

As chaos erupted, Black told his wife, Michelle, to run. Then the 58-year-old father of three from North Smithfield leaped toward the shooter, several rows below him.

"It was total focus on the gun," Black said in an interview Wednesday, recalling the moment he jumped onto Robert Dorgan, 56, who had already shot several members of his own family in the stands.

The barrage of gunfire was captured on video that circulated on social media soon after the shooting. Many shots can be heard ahead of an 11-second gap, before a final, lone shot

PAWTUCKET, Page A7



"It was total focus on the gun," Michael Black said of his reaction.

PAWS IN THE ACTION

A dog ran onto the track near the finish during women's cross-country skiing heats on Wednesday. **Olympics coverage, C1-5.**



OLYMPIC BROADCASTING SERVICES VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bright side

Thursday: Sun is back. High 39-43. Low 27-32.

Friday: A little snow. High 35-40. Low 27-32.

Sunrise: 6:35 Sunset: 5:21

Weather and Comics, D5-6.

VOL. 309, NO. 50

*

Suggested retail price
\$4.00



0 947725 4