

Ridgefield stylist has been in the business for 50 years
LIFE, B1



Battle Ground High School senior seeks living kidney donor for transplant
CLARK COUNTY, A3



The Columbian

Tuesday, December 2, 2025 | Serving Clark County, Washington | www.columbian.com

License plate readers get attention

WA lawmakers eye limiting law agencies' use of technology

By **JAKE GOLDSTEIN-STREET**
Washington State Standard

Washington state lawmakers next year hope to rein in law enforcement's use of automated license plate read-

ers amid revelations federal immigration authorities are using the data.

The readers are mounted everywhere from street poles to police patrol cars. They take pictures of vehicles and use artificial intelligence to analyze the data. Police can use the information, stored in a database, to track vehicles that could be tied to criminal investigations.

At least 16 states regulate the readers. Washington does not.

The technology has become increasingly common in Washington and across the country and is used not only by police, but also businesses and community groups.

Washington's chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union is leading the charge to regulate the license plate

readers here. The issue has taken on new urgency during the Trump administration's campaign for mass deportations, said Tee Sannon, the organization's technology policy program director.

A report last month out of the University of Washington found several local police departments authorized U.S. Border Patrol to use their license plate reader databases. And in other cases,

Border Patrol had backdoor access without express permission. In some instances, police conducted searches on behalf of the federal agency.

The findings raise concerns about compliance with state law limiting cooperation with federal immigration enforcement.

In a statement, the head of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs

acknowledged the concerns. Executive Director Steve Strachan attributed the issue to sharing permissions allowing the feds to access plate reader data unbeknownst to local police.

"We continue to remind our members to be aware of their system restrictions to ensure that their data is only shared consistent with

READERS, Page A2

Washington's state law already tightly controls hemp-derived products, local experts say



High End Market Place Cannabis Dispensary in Uptown Village is pictured on Nov. 25. Congress is banning the illicit sale of hemp-derived products, as part of the federal shutdown bill which could affect the state's cannabis industry.

Federal regulations have little effect



Photos by **AMANDA COWAN**/The Columbian

Jesse King of High End Market Place Cannabis Dispensary, facing, assists a customer with a purchase on Nov. 25. Congress is banning unregulated hemp-derived products as part of the federal spending bill that reopened the government. In Washington, a similar regulation has been in effect since 2023.

By **KIMBERLY CORTEZ**
The Columbian

A provision quietly added into the spending bill that reopened the federal government last month banned unregulated hemp-derived products. But there may not be many downstream effects in Clark County due to the state's already strict regulation.

The new federal regulation will most likely affect states that haven't legalized cannabis,

COMMUNITY FUNDED JOURNALISM

where producers took advantage of a legal loophole to sell products made from high-potency, intoxicating hemp products, according to Jeff Hickok, a state-certified medical cannabis consultant at High End Market Place in Vancouver.

"These were becoming very big industries because people were figuring out that it's the exact same product that you'd sell at a dispensary here, but hemp was legal," he said.

Hemp was legalized in the federal 2018 farm bill and contains very low levels of Delta-9-THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana that makes a person feel high. Hemp is used in the production of fibers, paper, construction materials and also can-



Jeff Hickok of High End Market Place Cannabis Dispensary speaks with the media on Nov. 25. Congress is banning unregulated hemp-derived products as part of the federal spending bill that reopened the government.

nabidiol, or CBD, products, such as oils, capsules and topicals.

The new regulation now bans any products with a total concentration of THC above 0.3 percent on a dry-weight basis, whereas the previous definition only limited products with that same concentration of Delta-9 THC.

In Washington, a similar regulation has been in effect since 2023 when the Legislature passed Senate Bill 5367. Under the law, only licensed cannabis retailers may sell

products with any detectable levels of THC to consumers, including hemp-derived and synthetic THC, like Delta-8 THC.

The law was created due to similar public health concerns about unregulated products with hemp-derived and synthetic THC that had been showing up in convenience stores and smoke shops. According to the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board, there were no regulations for manufactur-

HEMP, Page A2

WA loses taxpayer every 30 minutes

WA ranked among highest for people leaving for other states

By **SIMONE CARTER**
The Olympian

OLYMPIA — Washington is among the top states losing taxpayers the most frequently on net from interstate migration, according to a new ranking by a national tax-research organization.

The Evergreen State says goodbye to another taxpayer every 29 minutes and 55 seconds, ranking No. 43 in the nation, per data published Monday by the National Taxpayers Union Foundation that shows how fast taxpayers are entering or leaving each state.

California came in last place at No. 51, losing a taxpayer every 1 minute and 44 seconds, according to NTUF. New York and Illinois followed behind, counting respective taxpayer-loss-rates of 2 minutes, 23 seconds and 6 minutes, 4 seconds.

The three states welcoming a new resident most regularly are Florida (2 minutes, 9 seconds), Texas (2 minutes, 53 seconds) and North Carolina (6 minutes, 21 seconds), the ranking shows.

NTUF claims this trend illustrates that Americans don't want to live in places with higher taxes.

"In short, interstate move-

TAXPAYERS, Page A2



Seahawks' Jones IV took out frustrations on Vikings

SPORTS, B9

Kevin Frazier:

Political inaction holds back AI's benefits

OPINION, A4



48°/39°

Advice **B2** Obituaries **A6** Regional news **A7** Television **B7**
Comics **B4-5** Puzzles **A6, A9, B2, B6, B7** Sports **B9** Weather **B12**

DAILY: \$3.00

© 2025 The Columbian

