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LAW & MONEY

'A ROCKET SHIP'

Looking for a leg up on the new pot business

Two Boston law firms – Foley Hoag and Burns & Levinson – are positioning themselves to cash in on recreational marijuana’s newly legal status in the Bay State.

There are small firms that specialize in marijuana law, but to date, few corporate law firms the size of Foley and Burns in the U.S. have dedicated marijuana practice groups.

Foley Hoag launched a marijuana-focused group last week. The firm already has Massachusetts medical-marijuana clients, helping them work through state regulations and deal with the cities and towns where they plan to do business, according to partner Kevin Conroy.

Massachusetts’ legaliza-

tion of recreational pot in November prompted Foley Hoag lawyers to reach out to law firms in Colorado and Washington that have built successful pot practices and are of a similar size to Foley Hoag. Those conversations helped the firm determine there’s a market for what Conroy called “sophisticated” legal services in the industry. Conroy believes Foley Hoag’s expertise in Massachusetts administrative law will help it woo dispensaries looking to set up shop in the Bay State. “We understand politics. This is a combination of politics, law and regulations,” Conroy said.

Burns & Levinson, meanwhile, has had a medical marijuana practice since

2013. It is now in the process of rebranding the group to encompass other cannabis businesses. “The cannabis caboose was starting to leave the station back then, and we knew it was going to be a rocket ship,” partner Frank Segall said.

