

## **Vote “No” on Proposal A**

Proposal A is a poorly drafted ordinance that would legalize possession of an ounce or less of marijuana on private property in Ferndale. That means not only houses, but parking lots, bars, restaurants, churches, private child care facilities and schools, or any other non-public place. Concerned citizens have raised a number of concerns about this proposal, as it could lead to a rash of unintended consequences including decreased property values, increased youth drug use, drug use in front of youth, and drugs being freely available to young people in a home. These may be unintended consequences on the part of the drafters of the proposed ordinance, but they are clearly foreseeable ones.

The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have compiled many research studies that show clear trends on teens increasingly viewing marijuana use as less risky over the past several years. At the same time, as perceived risk has declined and several states have legalized marijuana, the use of marijuana has suddenly started to go back up, after years of decline. Clearly, the kids are listening to the adult conversation. To those who say that youth alcohol use and prescription drug abuse are larger problems than marijuana use, we say of course. They are bigger problems with teens because they are legal and more readily available. Local legalization of marijuana will clearly increase the likelihood that marijuana use will become a significant teen problem in Ferndale, when it is not today.

NIH research also shows that significant risk factors in teen drug use are the presence of drugs in the home and the community’s views about illicit drug use. Here again, our community risks sending the wrong message. This could be countered by effective drug abuse prevention programs, but neither our schools nor our city have the money to spend. Legalization must be done on a federal or state level so that appropriate rules and regulations can be put in place. Increased funding for drug abuse prevention and for addiction treatment must accompany legalization because use, abuse and addiction will all increase. These approaches can only work on the state and federal level because of the limitations of municipal and public school district financing.

Finally, we cannot start nullifying federal or state laws that we do not like. Our federal system of government has clearly placed drug laws at higher levels of government. We fought a civil war over the issue of whether states can nullify federal law. Certainly with that question settled for states, our small city should not proceed down that path. Many of us laugh derisively when governors and others try to nullify the Affordable Care Act, because that is clearly settled federal law. Let’s not put our police in the position of having to choose between enforcing conflicting local and state legislation. They are sworn to uphold the laws of the State of Michigan. If we don’t like those laws, then Lansing (or Washington) is the place to change them.

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