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Petition for medical marijuana ballot measure in Kalamazoo falls short of needed signatures

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By Paula M. Davis | Kalamazoo Gazette
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KALAMAZOO — Organizers were 73 valid signatures short of the requisite number needed to put a **medical marijuana dispensary ballot measure before Kalamazoo voters in November**, according to a news release from Kalamazoo City Clerk Scott Borling.

Kalamazoo Coalition for Compassionate Care can collect more signatures for a ballot question next year, the clerk said.

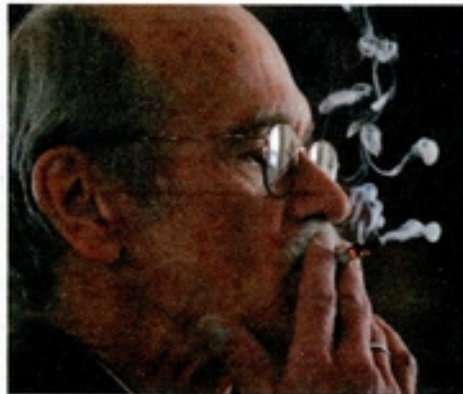
But a Michigan Court of Appeals decision released Wednesday may have dealt the coalition's mission to get the issue before city voters an even greater blow.

The court has deemed that dispensaries doing patient-to-patient sales are illegal based on the Michigan Medical Marihuana Act approved by voters statewide in 2008. It legalized the use of medical marijuana but did not allow for sales between patients, the court said.

The coalition, led by Kalamazoo resident Chris Chiles, hoped to get this question before city voters: "Shall the Kalamazoo City Charter be amended to such that three (3) medical cannabis dispensaries are permitted within the city limits?"

But after reviewing the signatures the coalition submitted, city clerk officials determined the 2,494 were valid. But they needed 2,567, or 5 percent of the registered voters at the time of filing.

The coalition can submit more signatures to achieve the number needed and Chiles said they plan to do so.



Lon Horwadel / AnnArbor.com

In this file photo, Ann Arbor resident Chuck Raam takes on a joint. Raam smokes marijuana to help with a gastrointestinal problem he's had since 1958. Raam said he could barely function in the mid 1970's until he started smoking marijuana on a daily basis.

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