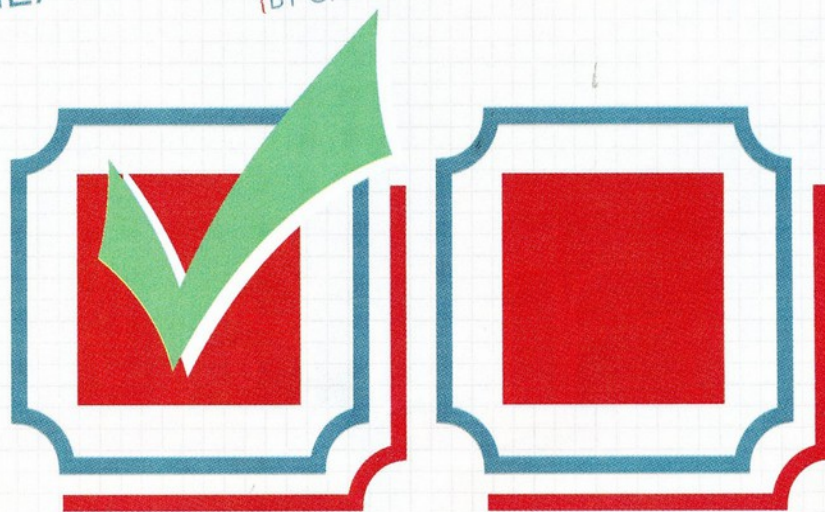


BUZZ

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# MICHIGAN VOTER GUIDE

A BREAKDOWN OF FIVE MARIJUANA-RELATED MEASURES  
HEADED FOR YOUR LOCAL BALLOT  
(BY CHARMIE GHOLSON)



Seventeen states—and Washington, D.C.—have legalized medical marijuana. This annoys the daylight out the DEA and Office of National Drug Control Policy, who refuse to acknowledge marijuana has any medicinal properties and work hard to maintain a state of complete prohibition.

This month, voters in three U.S. states — Colorado, Oregon and Washington—will decide whether or not to legalize marijuana for adult use (recreational or otherwise), potentially prompting a head-to-head clash with the federal government in a states' rights battle. Former DEA heads are already calling on the current administration to put an end to reasonable cannabis legislation—but big-picture activists have long ignored the trumpeting calls of wrongheaded pot prohibitionists. Sensible drug policy reform does *not* turn our children into drug addicts or unravel the moral fiber of our society.

Committed Michigan activists in five cities have gathered enough signatures to decriminalize possession of cannabis, allow for dispensaries and make marijuana law enforcement the police's lowest priority. The five ballot questions—in Flint, Kalamazoo, Detroit, Grand Rapids and Ypsilanti—are all up for vote this month.

Chuck Ream, who is overseeing at least one of these, says that this same strategy was used to put our statewide medical marijuana law (MMA) in place. "In the past, we won five local city initiatives in Michigan," Ream tells *CULTURE*, "and eventually those gains resulted in our state-wide medical law."

Ream predicts such efforts will "win all five of the city contests by a large majority! And that must also result in major policy change on the state level. We want at least statewide 'decrim' because we live in a democracy, and this will make it clear that voters want fundamental cannabis law reform."



Handwritten initials: A V

### Kalamazoo – City Charter Amendment Proposal #7

👍 This city already relaxed its cannabis laws with a “Lowest Law Enforcement Priority” (this makes marijuana offenses the police department’s lowest priority) win last year by a 2 to 1 margin. This time, local voters will be asked a simple question: “*Shall the Kalamazoo City Charter be amended such that three (3) medical cannabis dispensaries are permitted within the city limits?*”

In 2010, a court of appeals decision effectively shut down many of the safe access dispensaries across the state, with the exception of a few counties. That case is headed to the Michigan Supreme Court. Until the ruling is issued, patient-to-patient transfers of medical cannabis are considered illegal.

### Ypsilanti – Lowest Law Enforcement Priority (LLEP) Initiative

👍 Similar to Kalamazoo’s current state of affairs, Ypsilanti residents will vote on the following question: “*Shall the Ypsilanti City Charter be amended such that the use and/or consumption of one (1) ounce or less of usable marijuana by adults 21 years or older is the lowest priority of law enforcement personnel?*”

Chuck Ream, political director of this LLEP initiative, says the “reaction was extraordinarily positive. People would rather be protected from robbery or murder than have the police chasing some kid for pot. Everyone wanted to sign even if they were not from the city of Ypsilanti.”

### Flint – City Code Amendment (Subsection 31-27.1.2)

👍 In Flint, which by the way holds the honor of being the murder capitol of the country, organizer Brian Morrissey reports that the decriminalization campaign is going quite well. The initiative would decriminalize possession of up to one ounce of marijuana (and marijuana paraphernalia) on private property for adults 19 and older.

“Two online polls have happened,” he told *CULTURE* via email. “One in July on *MLive.com* in which 76 percent of readers voted yes, one on WDZZ, an R&B radio station popular in the middle-aged African American community, in which the proposal received a 94 percent yes vote.”

• Yes • • No •



### Detroit - Proposal M

👍 The Detroit measure seeks to remove penalties for adults over the age of 21 if they are in possession of one (1) ounce of marijuana or less. This bill would allow possession, but not impact the ability to grow or distribute cannabis.

Local residents collected over 6,000 signatures in 2010 to put this measure on the city ballot, but the city clerk refused to put it up for a vote, claiming it conflicted with state drug laws that make marijuana illegal. The Michigan appellate court ruled in February that the city was wrong to deny the petition a place on the ballot. An appeal was made to the Michigan Supreme Court, which confirmed the original ruling.

Both Detroit police officials and state police in Metro Detroit have declined to comment on the law, but just-resigned Chief Ralph L. Godbee Jr., said he opposes the measure. Godbee stepped down last month after admitting he had an improper relationship with a female internal affairs officer.

### Grand Rapids – Proposal 2

👍 Grand Rapids is quite conservative, yet support for reform is at an all-time high. The proposed amendment to the city’s charter would “*decriminalize possession, control, use or gift of marijuana, through a Charter amendment prohibiting police from reporting same to law enforcement authorities other than the City Attorney; prohibiting the City Attorney from referring same to other law enforcement authorities for prosecution; prohibiting City prosecution except as civil infractions enforced by appearance tickets with a maximum fine of \$100 and no incarceration; waiving fines if a physician, practitioner or other qualified health professional recommends the defendant use marijuana; and providing an affirmative defense to prosecution for defendants intending to use marijuana to relieve pain, disability or discomfort.*”

If approved, this would change the city’s laws so that possession of marijuana would be a civil infraction punishable with only a \$25 fine for the first offense. Fines would increase modestly for subsequent offenses. ☺