

Chuck Copy  
for presentation

Lessons Learned, Post Successful Campaign, City of Ypsilanti, Michigan

Nov. 6 2012. A voter initiated ballot question asked voters to amend the city charter making possession of non-medical marijuana the lowest law enforcement priority of the City of Ypsilanti.

RESULTS: 74% in favor, 5,635 Yes and 1,914 No.

Text of approved ballot question:

"Shall the Ypsilanti City Charter be amended such that the use and/or consumption of one ounce or less usable marijuana by adults 21 years and older is the lowest priority of law enforcement personnel" Yes or No

Personnel:

Charles "Chuck" Ream, Campaign Director, providing leadership by setting example and clearly defining goals and responsibilities. Responsible for all financial and personnel decisions.

Students from SSDP EMU Chapter, Miles Gerou, Antonio Cosme. Responsible for filing official paperwork with the City of Ypsilanti. Media relations, signature gathering, and handover of petition to City Hall.

John Evans, signature verification, default campaign manager by recognizing trends in personnel and techniques during verification process.

Leadership Team, Tim Beck, Chris Chiles, Ben Horner and Chuck Ream. Responsible for overall direction and example and for providing the "standard" for the verification process.

Major factors for success.

\*City of Ypsilanti is an easy target, (CHECK PAST ELECTION RESULTS OF ANY CITY UNDER CONSIDERATION),

\*Relatively high density urban environment,

\*History of accepting medical marijuana by providing licensing and regulations of dispensaries.

\*City of Ypsilanti located in Washtenaw County, voters of Washtenaw County approved the MMMA of 2008 at 71% in favor.

A strong leadership team, motivated individuals with a history of successful campaigning, was providing geographical diversity from the state of Michigan. (5 cities spread across the state).

Local commitment and support, dedicated local individuals with a vested interest and willingness to be "boots on the ground".

Follow-up pressure on City Hall, direct and forceful from Chuck Ream.

### Campaign notes and lessons learned

The campaign was simple, direct, and small (compared to the complexity of the Grand Rapids campaign).

The campaign had three basic goals.

\*Obtaining at least 10% more than the 700 required verified signatures by providing financial compensation to signature gatherers.

\*Providing letters to the editor from local residents to local print media.

\*Big bright signs (on Election Day) were placed and maintained at all polling locations in the City of Ypsilanti, following all local ordinances and regulations for election polling sites.

#### SIGNATURE VERIFICATION!!

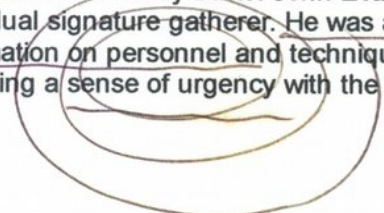
High standard were set by the leadership team for the all important signature verification process. (In Ypsi the clerk gave us a disc containing all currently registered voters that we could use to check signatures.) By organizing and committing to signature gathering events, the leadership team not only provided a good example to others by showing a willingness to work, but also provided an example of signatures from known and skilled people for analysis.

From petition sheets by the leadership team, we were able to recognize ineffective petition locations or techniques. ("Man on the street" soliciting or working at the bus station produces far fewer valid signatures than working door to door).

Ypsilanti was targeted because of high density and small geographical area, and perceived as easy. Regrettably this is a liability for traditional signature gathering technique of "man on the street". In a geographically small, urban area a majority of "men on the street" are very often from outside of city limits. MANY VOTERS HAVE NO IDEA WHETHER THEY LIVE IN THE CITY OR THE TOWNSHIP!

The best signature gathering is done "door to door" by motivated individuals. This conclusion is supported by the high percentage of verifiable signatures turned in by Miles and Antonio from "door to door" and almost 100% validity from "jedi master" Tim Beck, after being given feedback on technique. Efforts to gather signatures at a public transportation hub, the bus terminal, were much less effective.

Communication and timely verification of signatures is crucial. Petitions sheets must be turned in on a weekly basis. John Evans provided timely reports on the validity rate of each individual signature gatherer. He was able to provide the campaign director crucial information on personnel and technique allowing for adjustment of financial incentives, and providing a sense of urgency with the updated status of qualified signatures.



Follow-up pressure on City Hall is useful to prevent any delay in counting or verification by City Hall employees – which could then prevent the petition from reaching State officials in Lansing for their review. (Lansing officials must review it, but they have no authority to stop it.)

Follow-up was done good cop, bad cop style. Chuck Ream, acting bad cop, forcefully expressing and demanding the process be completed before the deadline, threatening with lawsuit, etc. Message was heard, action was taken, signatures verified.

Follow-up by good cop John Evans. Providing doughnuts from local bakery, expressing gratitude for the hard work done by city workers. After second delivery of a dozen doughnuts, John Evans was given official city count of 1,125 qualified signatures, well above turn in count of 850.

As a result of acting good cop, and providing doughnuts, a City Hall employee was willing to provide information explaining the discrepancy between their numbers and mine. Two major reasons.

\*An older verification checklist sheet was initially used,

\*An unexpected large amount of newly registered voters were not on the verification checklist provided.

New Voters only account for 20 to 30% of the difference. The vast majority of error was due to multiple addresses listed by college aged students. Be prepared for a higher error rate in a university town. The verification checklist only had one address listed. The City Hall checklist contained all known addresses for registered voters. Overall City Hall was very liberal, and made every effort to count every signature, possibly a result of pressure by Chuck Ream. The verification by John Evans was very conservative on purpose. He was looking for reasons not to approve a signature. Small errors resulted from Hispanic women having Maria as a first name, but casually using middle name for the petition. Chinese Americans may sign with Christian names, not using their traditional names as listed on the voter registration list.

#### Working with students from SSDP of EMU,

Students highly motivated, able and willing to deal with media, presenting a positive image, and provided high percentage of good signatures. At times communication with students was lost. This should not be seen as lack of commitment, but from a management perspective we try to understand the pressures of finals and the desire to "disappear" afterwards.

#### Placement and timing of campaign posters/signs at polling locations on Election Day.

Placement of signs started at 6 AM. Approximately at the same time city officials were removing campaign signs and marking the 100 foot limit from the door of the polling location. City officials were very friendly in allowing campaign worker to climb in truck and reclaim confiscated signs, and provided information on correct placement of signs as per city regulations. Signs removed starting 8:15 PM after all

eligible voters were inside polling locations.

Campaign signs returned to Chuck Ream, less 4. Two signs donated to Canna Cure University in Ypsilanti, one donated to One Love Culture Shop, Depotown (with request it stay in Depotown, for historical purposes), one to John Evans.

Only one letter to the editor was published (Ann Arbor.com), on this issue and was in support. No information on how many letters were sent and to what media. (Miles used an SSDP meeting at Eastern to write letters, but these didn't make the paper).

As stated by campaign director Chuck Ream, Ypsilanti Mayor Paul Schreiber, and other members of the city of Ypsilanti City Council, this vote is mainly symbolic and will have little immediate effect on the residents and police force of the City of Ypsilanti. As the city of Ypsilanti has been progressive with licensing and regulation of medical marijuana dispensaries local law-enforcement has taken a less combative and more compassionate view and understanding of medical marijuana.

**This overwhelming public support for de-prioritizing cannabis law enforcement** should not go unnoticed. Four other voter initiative campaigns for the normalization and acceptance of marijuana were overwhelmingly passed by Michigan voters on Nov. 6. These results should be heard loud and clear in Lansing.

At minimum, (if we live in a democracy) these results must lead to the statewide **de-criminalization of marijuana in Michigan.**