

Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber Education Statement Regarding Initiative to Legalize Marijuana

Muskegon, MI – The Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce is asking voters to be aware of the business issues related to the 2018 Recreational Marijuana Ballot Proposal. A new law may threaten the ability of employers and communities to provide safe, drug-free workplaces, and the quality of the products they make.

In Muskegon County, there are thousands of local jobs in aerospace, automotive, healthcare, and food production. The area's largest employers have zero-tolerance drug policies. "These employers will continue their zero-tolerance policies regardless of the vote outcome. Zero-tolerance means individuals testing positive for drug use, in most cases, will not be hired or can be terminated," says Cindy Larsen, Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber President.

"Michigan is not ready for recreational marijuana because the proposed law is not clear on how to protect the rights of the employer or employee," says Larsen. "We hope that voters will consider issues related to their own jobs and careers and those of their friends and family before they cast their vote regarding recreational use of this controversial drug."

The chamber education statement references the business issues related to finding qualified workers, health and safety, liability, accuracy in testing, and current federal and state regulatory gaps.

Brief Law Description

The proposed law allows adults 21 and older to purchase, possess, use and grow marijuana. The law also allows individuals to keep up to 10 ounces of marijuana in their homes and cultivate up to 12 plants for personal use.

Business Issues

Qualified workers. The number of workers who fail drug tests has increased significantly in recent years. The number of available drug-free workers may dictate the size or scale of a business. Less available workers may force businesses to relocate or stifle growth resulting in a lower number of jobs available locally.

Open-ended liability. Under the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration, employers are required to provide their employees with a place of employment "free from recognizable hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious harm to employees." Failure to do so opens employers to liability and lawsuits.

No explicit statutory protections for employers. The proposal raises questions related to drug-free workplace policies and employer rights. Will the proposed law allow Michigan employers to:

- Enforce drug-free workplace policies?
- Define mental or physical impairments related to marijuana use?
- Terminate employees for cause due to a positive drug test without eligibility for unemployment insurance (UI) benefits; and/or
- Deny workers' compensation (WC) benefits if a workplace injury was caused by the injured employee's use of marijuana?

Other Federal limitations. On a federal level this activity is still illegal, therefore, the regulatory environment is unclear and confusing for a number of industries such as banking, transportation, manufacturing, healthcare and other related industries.

No impairment test. The lack of accurate impairment testing and measurements create significant human resources dilemmas as employers attempt to guarantee safe work environments and the quality of the products they make.

State Law violations. Education is needed regarding laws related to driving under the influence. Work time missed and fines/legal fees hinder employee credibility and financial independence.

Future workforce. Research supports that use of marijuana by teenagers may cause additional health concerns including marijuana as a "gateway drug." The health of local residents and overall community will impact future generation workforce availability.

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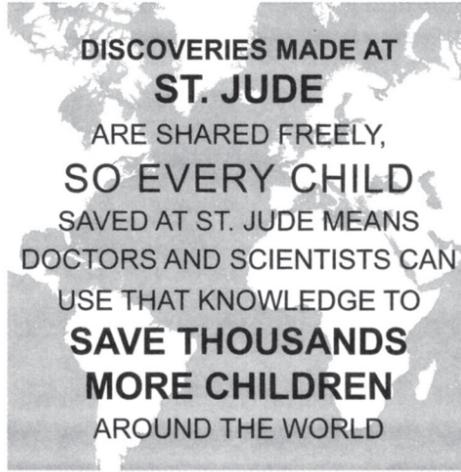
Bethel Baptist Church, 213 W. Oak St, will become Calvary Church of Muskegon in the coming months.

The polling location will not change.

Those who vote at Bethel Baptist Church will continue to vote at the same location although it will have a new name.

Should you have any questions, please contact Fruitport Township Clerk, Andrea Anderson.

Phone: (231)865-3151 or e-mail aanderson@fruitporttownship.com



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For more information, please contact us:

Phone: (231) 798-7411
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