

Remarks: Jerry Cox
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News Conference

Issue 3

State Capitol Rotunda

October 16, 2024

My name is Jerry Cox. I am the executive director of Family Council Action Committee in Little Rock. We are here today to let everyone in Arkansas know why they should vote against Issue 3, the proposed Arkansas Medical Marijuana Amendment of 2024. I also plan to discuss our grassroots campaign against it.

While we wait for the Arkansas Supreme Court to issue a final ruling on the status of this amendment, we decided to step forward and let voters know just how bad Issue 3 really is.

Supporters of Issue 3 will tell you that this is about patient access. Don't believe the lie. Medical marijuana has been legal in Arkansas for 8 years. Over 100,000 people have medical marijuana cards. Anyone who is ill and wants to use medical marijuana can do so. So, what is Issue 3 really about?

Issue 3 will make over 30 changes to our state constitution and there is a lot wrong with it, but today I plan to focus on three dangerous flaws.

1. The amendment was written by the marijuana industry to give themselves a permanent monopoly.
2. The amendment will hurt children, because it repeals restrictions on advertising and child safety, marketing, and packaging.
3. The amendment gives free taxpayer-funded, marijuana cards to anyone, including illegal immigrants and other non-residents.

First, voters need to ask, "Who is behind Marijuana Issue 3? Is it really about patient access?" Just like the marijuana amendment Arkansans voted down two years ago, this amendment was written by Big marijuana to give themselves a monopoly over marijuana growing and selling from now on. The marijuana industry has raised over \$2 million to convince voters that Issue 3 is about patient access. If that were true, the amendment would allow more marijuana dispensaries for patients, instead of creating a monopoly.

Second, marijuana advertising is mostly illegal in Arkansas. If Issue 3 passes, those barriers will be eliminated. Marijuana Issue 3 targets our children by changing the restrictions on marketing. If Issue 3 passes, our children could be inundated with marijuana ads on their phones, online and on TV. Imagine seeing ads from Big marijuana like we see from the casinos and drug companies. In addition, Issue 3 removes the child proof testing safety requirement on packaging and removes restrictions on product designs, including shapes and flavors that appeal to children.

Third, Marijuana Issue 3 guarantees free marijuana cards to anyone at taxpayer expense. This includes free marijuana cards to users from out-of-state and even to illegal immigrants who come to Arkansas. All of this could make our communities more dangerous, hurt tourism, and cause people to leave our state. California legalized marijuana many years ago, and its streets have filled with drug addicts in homeless encampments. We can't afford to become another California. Arkansas simply does not need another drug problem.

Now, let me briefly tell you about our campaign to urge everyone to vote against Marijuana Issue 3.

This amendment is deceptive and we hope the legal challenges before the Arkansas Supreme Court will be successful. The ballot title is especially misleading. However, if the court orders Issue 3 to be certified for the ballot, we will do our best to warn citizens about this amendment.

1. We are planning a statewide tour of 25 cities beginning on Tuesday of next week and running all the way until election day. These will be forums open to the public where anyone can learn about Issue 3. A list of the cities is in your press packet.
2. We are working with volunteers in every county to place campaign material in churches. There is a one-page flier in your press packet.
3. Over the weekend we began a limited number of digital ads mainly through online streaming platforms. In your press packets you will find links to the video ads.

With Issue 3, marijuana millionaires are trying to write themselves into our State Constitution. We certainly don't need Big Marijuana giving themselves a permanent monopoly on something that will harm our kids and our communities. This is what we will have if Issue 3 passes. Arkansas doesn't need another drug problem. We can put a stop to this by voting against Issue 3.