

The United States of America is a democracy and as a democracy it should abide by the will of the voters. My main objection to our prohibiting cannabis dispensaries in Green is the fact that it goes against the will of the voters. Ohio Issue 2 was for the legalization of marijuana. 57.2% of Ohio voted yes for legalization. According to the Board of Elections' Summit County Ohio final official canvass by precinct, the vote in Summit County was 60.6% in favor of legalization. In the City of Green, 51% also voted yes. Yes, cities are allowed to adopt ordinances to prohibit adult-use dispensaries, but by doing so they are in effect taking away the rights of the citizens by making it very difficult to obtain a legalized product. Medical marijuana is also becoming more useful in treating patients with cancer, MS, epilepsy, Chron's disease, chronic pain, sleeplessness and other ailments. Using marijuana may decrease the usage of pain pills which are highly addictive. Many of these ailments occur in older individuals which means driving long distances to get their prescriptions may not be feasible.

It was mentioned that the real estate companies don't like having dispensaries in the cities as it decreases sales. I question that fact. I asked my friends and neighbors if they considered this when they purchased their homes and they laughed and said that was not a concern at all. In fact, I learned that many of them or family members already use medical marijuana, mostly as edibles.

It was also mentioned that we don't want to "normalize" the use of marijuana to children. Yet we normalize potentially addictive productive and harmful products all the time. How many people have a beer, a glass of wine or a cocktail before dinner or after dinner or at a restaurant, in the presence of their children? Is that not normalizing alcohol? How many parents smoke cigarettes and cigars in front of their children? Is that not normalizing these products? We have cigar stores that allow smoking in their premises and permit smoking on restaurant patios. All of these things are legal to people over the age of 21. Yet we allow their purchase in the city and we expect the parents to teach their children not to use these products until they are of legal age and we require that these products are only sold to customers that are over 21.

Now let's talk about vaping. There is a push against having marijuana dispensaries because we don't want the children using it or normalizing it. Yet we have two vape stores in Green and they are on our main streets Arlington and Massillon. How is that a good look for our city? How is that affecting our real estate market? E-cigarettes are addictive and are not FDA regulated. They contain nicotine and chemicals such as propylene glycol, formaldehyde, diethylene glycol and heavy metals. Plus the vape companies target the youth culture, especially on social media. How is it that the City of Green has these kind of stores?

So in our city we sell cigarettes, cigars, alcohol and vaping devices. All of these products can be considered harmful to the youth and adults. All of these can be potentially addicting. All of these are limited for purchase to people over 21. Why should marijuana be treated differently then these products?

Yes, the City of Green can pass an ordinance not to allow dispensaries. But the reasons why are not compelling to me, especially because we have other regulations that do not allow its use in parks or outdoors. In effect we are banning a business that sells a legal product that is basically only allowed to be used in someone's private property and that is often used for medical purposes. It doesn't make much sense to me.