



Flint-Area News Now



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Flint Journal Editorial: Discounting scare tactics best way to judge ballot proposals

By: *The FLINT JOURNAL*

If you've been watching the advertising for the two proposals that appear on the statewide ballot, you're seeing more scare tactics than science or medicine.

Opponents are working hard to make both of these measures sound alarming, but thoughtful voters will work past that and judge the merits of the two, although in our view, one has more merit than the other.

Proposal 1 allows terminally and seriously ill patients to use marijuana to relieve pain with their doctor's approval, and to cultivate small amounts of marijuana for medical use.

Flint approved such a measure overwhelmingly last year, and other cities, including Ann Arbor, Detroit and Traverse City, have done likewise. Supporters now are trying to win statewide approval.

We opposed this plan when it was on the ballot locally, and for now, we remain opposed to the idea.

We understand that advocates are motivated by compassion for the suffering of the ill, and that argument may sway state residents. But we think the medical case for this use of marijuana has not been established well enough to legalize it.

In Michigan, key health groups such as the Michigan State Medical Society and the Michigan Health and Hospital Association oppose Proposal 1. They note that alternative pain medications are available and they express concerns about the risks of smoking marijuana and possible side effects. We share these concerns and oppose Proposal 1.

Proposal 2, on the other hand, is one we can support. It addresses a great irony, which is that in the state of Michigan, it's perfectly fine to throw away embryos that are created for fertility treatment, but not to use them for cutting-edge research that could lead to the cure of debilitating diseases and injuries.

Michigan has one of the country's most restrictive approaches on embryonic stem cell research. Proposal 2 would allow us to join 40 other states where this research is more freely allowed.

We believe this type of research is important, and that Michigan, with its great research institutions, should not be shackled by the current ban. It is true that some research can be done with adult stem cells, but the fullest and most promising range of research requires embryonic stem cells. While those can be imported into Michigan, they are not very available, further hindering research here.

Despite the campaign waged against Proposal 2, we don't see a slippery slope here. Cloning would continue to be banned, and the sale of embryos would be illegal. The proposal doesn't call for public funding of this research.

Without Proposal 2, embryos will continue to be thrown away. With it, they can be used for vital research. That's why we support Proposal 2.