



Ohio Ballot Issue 3: Legalizing Marijuana

The Catholic Bishops of Ohio urge a **no** vote on State Issue 3, the legalization of marijuana for personal and medicinal purposes. The following reflections are offered for your prayerful consideration.

In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue. The responsibility to make political choices rests with each person and his or her properly formed conscience.

Catholic voters are called to properly form their consciences in preparation for voting and for the continued advocacy for just laws and policies required after voting. This process requires constant prayer, understanding of Church teaching, and discernment that goes beyond campaign rhetoric and partisan politics.

Reflection Questions Related to Issue 3

1. Will passage promote the value, dignity and health of the human person?
2. Will passage promote fundamental fairness, enhance political participation and accountability, and advance the common good of persons in the state, especially the poor and vulnerable?
3. Have I weighed the various arguments, for and against, and measured them in light of Catholic Social Teaching?
4. Is the issue needed and well conceived?
5. Does the issue reflect a change that should be addressed in the State Constitution (as opposed to an issue that ought to be addressed through the legislative process)?

Summary of Issue 3

- Initially endows exclusive rights for commercial marijuana growth, cultivation, and extraction to ten self-designated landowners.
- Permits retail sale of marijuana and marijuana infused products at approximately 1,100 locations statewide.

- For persons aged 21 and older: Legalizes the purchase and personal use of up to one ounce of marijuana, and allows licensed persons to grow, possess and share homegrown marijuana in an amount not to exceed four flowering plants and eight ounces of usable marijuana.
- Authorizes the use of medical marijuana by any person, regardless of age, who has a certification for a debilitating medical condition.
- Creates special tax rates on gross revenue related to the production and sale of marijuana. Revenues from the tax go to local governments and the amendment-created state government agency called the marijuana control commission.

Pro Argument (Adapted from the official ballot arguments)

Passage will provide for personal choice, compassionate care, good jobs, well-funded local government services and a tightly regulated industry. www.yeson3ohio.com

Con Argument (Adapted from the official ballot arguments)

Passage cements in the Constitution a billion-dollar marijuana monopoly for a small group of wealthy investors, puts children at risk, and allows adults, 21 or older, to possess about 500 average-sized marijuana joints. www.noissue3.com



Catholic Conference of Ohio Position

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* warns that the non-therapeutic use of drugs inflicts very grave damage on human health and life (#2291). Practicing the virtue of temperance disposes one to avoid every kind of excess, including drunkenness and substance abuse.

We do not believe that Issue 3 is well conceived. We agree with opponents of issue 3 that the scope of this amendment is overly broad. We worry about the negative consequences broad exposure to marijuana will have, especially on children. We strongly believe that many of the proposed legalization provisions do not belong in the State Constitution.

The Catholic Bishops of Ohio are opposed to Issue 3.