

Attorneys: Medical marijuana dispensary ‘not a crack house’

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Two attorneys who are defending people arrested in the Aug. 25 drug raids say they believe their clients will be acquitted and that Oakland County is wasting taxpayer money trying the cases.

Jeffrey Perlman and Michael Komorn, both of Southfield, have teamed to defend several of the people who were arrested during a raid at Everybody’s Cafe in Waterford.

The raid conducted by the Oakland County’s Narcotics Enforcement Team at various growing operations and marijuana dispensaries across the county resulted in the arrest of nearly 20 people.

A pre-exam will be held today in the Waterford Township auditorium. The unusual location was requested because of the large number of people who will be in court.

Perlman and Komorn rebutted several points made by Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard, Prosecuting Attorney Jessica Cooper and County Executive L. Brooks Patterson during a recent interview at The Oakland Press when the three spoke out against the current medical marijuana law.

Perlman was especially upset that undercover officers used medical marijuana cards they created in-house to gain entry into dispensaries.

“(The people operating the dispensaries) were trying to be legal,” Perlman said.

Komorn said: “This (dispensary) was not a crack house. The people were checking cards and directing people where to go. This is about taking care of patients.”

In November 2008, Michigan voters approved a ballot proposal that included physician-approved use of marijuana by registered patients with debilitating medical conditions and allowed registered individuals to grow limited amounts of marijuana for qualified patients. The proposal passed by 63 percent.

Komorn said that opponents are “not acknowledging that (medical marijuana) is medicine. People are using it for a better quality of life.

“Most telling to me — I never realized are how many people in Michigan are on narcotics.”

Perlman felt the targeting of medical marijuana patients getting behind the wheel after using the drug was wrong.

“People drive on Vicodin all the time. If a person is operating a vehicle and they are impaired, they should be arrested but you don’t target medical marijuana patients because they are patients.”

Asked if caregivers should register with police, Komorn emphatically said no, saying experience has shown police treat medical marijuana patients “like criminals.

“This (busting marijuana users) has been the No. 1 business for law enforcement for years,” he said.

“Now they’re having a difficult time keeping their hands off.”

The charges faced by the people arrested include possession of marijuana and conspiracy to deliver.

“It’s more of an entrapment case,” Komorn said.

Cooper had said in October her primary interest in amending the law revolved around children and medical marijuana.

On the point of children being around patients smoking marijuana, Perlman argued children aren’t seeing parents smoking “unless they’re bad parents.”

Perlman said there are dispensaries currently open in Lansing but they aren’t raided.

Opponents of the law have spoken often about the great need for clarification of the law.

Komorn said, “This is an admission of different interpretations,” he said.

“This is the most hypocritical of all (by opponents). You can’t blame the law people are relying on to defend themselves and then move forward with the prosecution under the same law.”

Komorn noted that the medical marijuana is becoming a way for people in Michigan to make money. He agreed that clarification is needed on how to zone dispensaries and related businesses.

Perlman said his client was home shaving when the drug raid team came to his house.

He said if the client, Bill Teichman, had known what was coming, he would have worked with officials and “figured the right way to go. That’s why he called the Waterford police and said (in advance of starting the dispensary), ‘This is what I’m opening.’ ”

Perlman said local medical marijuana patients are now getting their medicine outside of Oakland County, and some are going to Genesee County.

“Oakland County believes in medical marijuana and there will be an acquittal (of the drug raid clients) in front of a jury,” Komorn said.

He called the court proceedings a “waste of money and resources to find way to prosecute and conduct a crusade against patients.”