

Critics claim police drug task forces are abusing their authority in Michigan

At a meeting in Port Huron yesterday, targets of law enforcement drug task forces said those officers are [abusing their power in Michigan](#).



Former state lawmaker Tom McMillin (right) takes part in a discussion of alleged abuses by law enforcement drug task forces in Michigan

Credit Steve Carmody / Michigan Radio

Speaker after speaker claimed the raids by heavily armed police officers on their homes have resulted in extensive damage and scared their children. During the raids, they claim officers tried to intimidate them.

“It’s child endangerment. It’s sexual harassment. It’s excessive force. That’s civil rights violations,” claims Charmie Gholson, with [Michigan Moms United](#). Gholson organized Tuesday’s meeting, which is the first of a series meetings planned around the state. Former Republican state lawmaker Tom McMillin sat on a panel which asked questions of the speakers at the meeting.

“Some of this stuff sounds criminal that law enforcement is doing,” McMillin said during a break in the meeting.

There were no law enforcement officials at Tuesday’s meeting in Port Huron. Charmie Gholson says she intentionally didn’t invited the St. Clair County sheriff’s office out of concern that some of the people at the meeting would feel intimidated.

After a state House committee meeting last month where Annette Shattuck testified about her experience with the local drug task force, St. Clair County Sheriff Tim Donnellon told the [Washington Post](#) she lied about officers on the county’s drug task force.

"She's a liar, plain and simple. That's all I can tell you," he said. He says that the task force did not hang lingerie from the ceiling fans or stomp food on the floor. The Shattucks, he said, are "trying to further their cause, which at the base of it is the legalization of marijuana in the state of Michigan."

State lawmakers are looking at making changes to the law under which drug task forces operate. The state House has passed a package of bills to add new reporting requirements and increase the burden of proof required to seize private property in drug raids. The bills are currently before the state Senate.

By STEVE CARMODY • JUL 29, 2015
[Michigan Radio.org](#)