

LAW & JUSTICE

Marijuana Dispensaries goes to Voters

Qualifies for November ballot

(AP) —With one hand, Lindsey Bradshaw hoisted his food bag onto his back, arranging the tube that has helped feed him since cancer ravaged his stomach seven years ago. In his other hand, he clutched a small gold bowl of marijuana and a pipe.

He depends on both devices to get through the day.

One of 36,380 patients registered with the Oregon Medical Marijuana Program, Bradshaw is a gardener who grows most of his own medical marijuana—one of two options that program participants have. They can also buy from a producer who sells to four or fewer people.

Those options leave people dry if they don't know a producer and are too sick to grow their own, Bradshaw said.

But that could change, if a ballot measure to create a system of medical marijuana dispensaries passes.

The measure certified for the November ballot July 16. It would establish Oregon as the seventh state to set up a state-regulated dispensary system.

Proponents of dispensaries say

they would make access easier for thousands of sick Oregonians, but Oregon police and officials from other states with dispensaries caution that access can spiral out of control, resulting in unregistered dispensaries and illegal users.

In Oregon, dispensaries would be nonprofits registered with the Department of Health, and have yearly licenses. The department would be in charge of monitoring and inspections.

Dispensaries would prevent illness from mold or insects, which can occur when inexperienced users attempt to grow their own marijuana, Bradshaw said. Licensed patients who want to continue to grow their own medical marijuana could still do so.

Dispensaries could also offer different strains of marijuana with properties best suited to patients' symptoms, commonly severe pain or muscle spasms.

For Bradshaw, getting to select certain strains would be helpful, he said. The 62-year-old lost his spleen, a kidney, part of his stomach, colon



Containers of medicinal marijuana on display at a cannabis dispensary in San Francisco.

and pancreas to Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. He takes various drugs to deal with the pain, but said opiates like oxycodone leave him in a haze.

Proponents of the initiative, like Bradshaw, say putting the state in charge would keep dispensaries safe.

But Sgt. Erik Fisher of the Oregon police Drug Enforcement Section said that wouldn't make a difference. If dispensaries appear in Oregon, honest patients would soon be in the minority, Fisher said. All

you have to do is look at California where the dispensaries opened the door for more abuse, he said.

If someone purchased \$40 in medical marijuana at an Oregon dispensary, "what's to prevent them from sticking that...in a FedEx package, sending it to New York and making \$600?"

"It'll make it easier to skirt the law," he said. "You make it more available to patients, you make more available to criminals."

The measure restricts where dispensaries can open—they must be

1,000 feet away from schools and residential neighborhoods. It does not limit the number of dispensaries that can open.

Advocates say the dispensaries would bring much-needed revenue to the state, an estimated \$10 million to \$40 million in the first year.

Producers would have to pay a \$1,000 fee and distributors a \$2,000 fee to cover program-operating costs, and would give 10 percent of their revenue back to the state. The health department could pick where to allocate the funds.

The department has not analyzed possible impacts of the initiative or planned how they would regulate dispensaries, said Dr. Grant Higginson, the state public health officer who worked with the explanatory statement of the initiative for the ballot.

The Oregon Medical Marijuana Program currently registers cardholders and their caregivers—it has nothing to do with inspections or regulations. If the initiative were to pass, he said, it would transform the program.

Death Costs \$1.6 Million

City settles lawsuit with Chasse family

(AP)—The Portland City Council has approved a \$1.6 million settlement in the police custody death of James Chasse, a mentally ill Portland man.

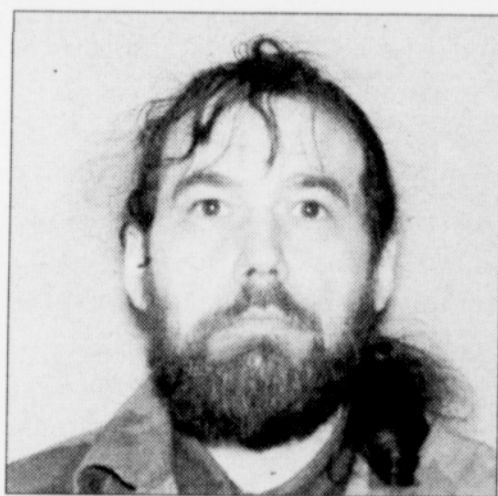
Chasse, 42, suffered broken ribs that punctured his lung and led to his death in September 2006 after officers tackled him on a downtown street corner.

His family sued the city, Multnomah County and an ambulance company in federal court.

The settlement with his family was approved by the Portland City Council July 28. The family settled earlier with Multnomah County for \$925,000 and a reported \$600,000 with the ambulance company.

About \$767,000 of the \$1.6 million settlement will come out of the city's insurance and claims fund. The remaining \$833,000 will come from the city's secondary insurance carrier.

It took the Portland Police Bureau three years to complete an internal review of the death, leading city Auditor LaVonne Griffin-Valade



James Chasse

to order an outside review.

Members of Chasse's family released a statement through their attorney, Tom Steenson.

They said they had been advised not to take the settlement offer, but they did not believe they would gain much more by going through a long, painful trial.

"We are relieved that the case has settled, but it is a very rough form of justice: the truth is that a civil suit seems to be the only form of justice that our local system will allow when police are involved in a killing," the family wrote.

They ended with a tribute to James, a "painfully shy" man who preferred books and comic books over talking.

"James, may you rest in peace. We love you and we miss you."



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