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Public education groups united in opposition to State Issue 3

COLUMBUS — The Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA), Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA) and Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO) today announced their opposition to State Issue 3, a proposed constitutional amendment to legalize marijuana.

The public education groups said they share the concern of Ohio’s children’s hospitals that the wide-open nature of the amendment threatens the health and safety of young people and will have a negative impact on student achievement.

“As a proposed constitutional amendment, Issue 3 poses a ‘take-it-or-leave-it’ choice to Ohioans,” said OSBA Executive Director Richard Lewis. “This sends the wrong message to young people and poses an actual danger, as has been reported in other states that have legalized marijuana.”

Kirk Hamilton, BASA executive director, expressed concerns about the more than 1,100 retail marijuana stores allowed for under the proposal, and by the high personal possession limits.

“With more marijuana stores than McDonald’s in the state, our children could easily be exposed to marijuana just walking to school,” Hamilton said. “Allowing adults 21 and over to possess the equivalent of more than 500 marijuana joints is hardly a ‘limit.’ Some of this marijuana will fall into the hands of our young people.”

OASBO Executive Director David Varda noted that Issue 3 has deceptive restrictions on the location of marijuana stores. The proposal says stores cannot be located within 1,000 feet of a school, playground, day care center, library and certain other locations, but only if those locations existed prior to Jan. 1, 2015.

“Under Issue 3, it will be legal to put a marijuana store right next door to any new school building or playground,” Varda said. “This is particularly troubling for growing school districts that are managing expansion by adding new buildings or repurposing existing structures.”

OSBA, BASA, and OASBO are urging their members to vote NO on Issue 3.

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