

FORMAL JOINT CLERGY STATEMENT

Regarding June 18th Mansfield City Council vote on commercial cannabis moratorium

Endorsed by leading clergymen of eighty-four (84) Richland County congregations

Dated June 16, 2024 sent by email to the following: citycouncil@ci.mansfield.oh.us ,
dweiner@ci.mansfield.oh.us , and lames-ross@ci.mansfield.oh.us

"We encourage Mansfield City Council to vote "YES" to a six-month moratorium on commercial cannabis, a drug associated with addiction, crime, and impairment. Furthermore, it is our desire in the future City Council extends this moratorium indefinitely to prohibit this illicit drug.

As local stakeholders, the faith community has engaged the drug addiction crisis during the Opioid Crisis and even before, implementing drug treatment ministries, and promoting drug awareness thru marches and rallies. **We believe these community efforts will be undermined if commercial cannabis is permitted in city limits.** Furthermore, the momentum we achieved will be lessened.

In the Bible, the Book of Ecclesiastes says, "There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labor." (2:24 KJV) There is no question cannabis adversely impacts work. Since users of cannabis pursue a 'euphoric high,' work is impaired, and productivity is reduced. With skyrocketing THC levels in today's cannabis, more accessibility to cannabis will bring inebriated employees, more job accidents, and more absenteeism.

Our community is better than this.

It should be noted, following Mansfield City Council's formal opposition to recreational cannabis in 2015, and following City Council's prohibition of "medical" cannabis in 2017, Mansfield/Richland County in 2020 became the seventh top metropolitan area in the nation (areas under 200,000 population) for significant economic projects per capita. **Our community became a hot spot for job growth *without cannabis*.....it can be done.**

We wholeheartedly agree with the METRICH Executive Director who stated this past winter that "Mansfield is a community of children and families, and that a legislative body should not place revenue from the cannabis industry over the security and sanctity of the family." Without a doubt, more accessibility to cannabis will bring more exposure to children, damaging their brain development, jeopardizing their mental health, and lowering their academic performance.

Our children deserve better than this.

Allowing the Cannabis Industry to profit off collateral damage to our community is not acceptable. Commercial cannabis will only add to the trauma in our neighborhoods. It is no small matter that the blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it. (Proverbs 10:22 KJV) As lead clergymen from eighty-four area congregations, we ask Mansfield City Council to please vote "YES" to prohibit commercial cannabis in Mansfield, our community is counting on you.

Endorsed by leading clergymen of eighty-four (84) diverse Richland County congregations:

Pastor Doug Tackett, Taylortown Community
Pastor Jeffrey Lord, Mayflower Congregational
Pastor Joseph Yerger, Mansfield First EPC
Pastor Denny Nezrick, Lexington Presbyterian
Pastor Bobby Edwards, Jesus is Alive Holiness
Pastor Steve Kistler, New Life Church Christ
Pastor Eric Byrom, Mansfield Grace Fellowship
Pastor Joe Smith, Ontario Westside Baptist
Pastor Taylor Howard, Apostolic Holiness
Pastor Robert Kurtz, Mansfield Temple Baptist
Pastor Troy Wooten, Christian Life Center
Pastor Dave Parsons, Zion's Refuge Baptist
Pastor Ron Puff, Pleasant Valley Baptist
Pastor Bruce Philippi, Journey Life Center
Rabbi William Halbrook, Ontario Sar Shalom
Pastor James Marshall, Ganges Community
Pastor Rick Lewis, Shelby Connect Church
Pastor Jake Keister, Mansfield Church of GOD
Pastor LaMont Lindsey, Book of Life Church
Pastor Patrick Bailey, North Bend Church
Pastor Mark Meyer, Lexington Grace Point
Pastor Joe Nichols, ARK Empowerment Ctr.
Elder James DeWeese, Providence Church
Pastor Clyde Kerby, Hope & Healing Ministries
Pastor Jeremy Huff, Church of Jesus Christ
Pastor Ben Gregg, Plymouth Church of GOD
Pastor Mark Wireman, Shiloh Pentecostal
Pastor Chad Berry, New Liberty Baptist
Pastor Mike Wilson, Lincoln Heights Baptist
Pastor Paul Lintern, Oakland Lutheran
Pastor Jason Price, Mansfield Victory Baptist
Pastor Hank Webb, Shelby Belmont 96 Church
Pastor Rich Hurles, Plymouth LifePoint Church
Pastor Nate Gailey, Mansfield Hilltop Church
Pastor Matt O'Harra, Bellville First Baptist
Pastor Russell Stanford, All Believers in Christ
Pastor Clarence Sanderfer, New Life Baptist
Pastor James Hill, Mansfield Paradise Church
Pastor Ken Ginter, Abundant Life Tabernacle
Pastor Rick Sutter, Elm St. Freewill Baptist
Pastor David Howell, Powerhouse Worship Ctr.
Pastor Mark Kline, Berea Missionary Baptist
Pastor Chad Hayes, Mansfield Caesarea Baptist
Pastor Bryan Schatzinger, Mansfield Calvary Chapel
Pastor Dan Zediker, Mansfield Mission Point
Pastor Matt Merendino, Clear Fork Alliance
Pastor Brian Phillips, New Beginnings Freewill
Pastor Mark Dettmer, Pleasant Grove Community
Pastor Russ Smith, Shiloh Wesley Evangelical
Pastor Robert O'Brian, Apostolic Faith Assembly
Pastor Randy Raynes, Mansfield Fellowship Baptist
Pastor George Lewis, Shelby Temple of GOD
Bishop Sylvester Ginn, Hesed Agape Fellowship
Pastor Matthew Pond, Shelby First Freewill Baptist
Pastor Rick Wiseman, Promised Land Fellowship
Pastor Larry Hill, Bethel Freewill Baptist
Elder Moe Hill, Grace Evangelical Free Church
Bishop Anthony Cooper, Shelby Life Church
Pastor Steve Burkhalter, Mansfield Potter's House
Pastor Brad Gentile, Shelby First Baptist
Pastor Les & Grace Farley, Irresistible Church
Pastor Louis Blevins, Latter Rain COGIC
Pastor Steven Baldrige, Rome Community Church
Pastor Mark Lehman, M1 Church
Pastor Ferlie Yates, Hanna Road Church of GOD
Pastor Dink Porter, Mansfield Open Bible Church
Pastor Jonathan Stansell, Shelby Calvary Baptist
Deacon Dean Shifley, Abundant Grace Fellowship
Pastors James & Joi Davis, River Church Mansfield
Pastor Art Kennard, Shelby Maranatha Christian Ctr.
Pastor Jack Williams, Walker Lake Baptist
Pastor Les Vnasdale, Cornerstone Grace Brethren
Pastor Kevin Evans, Liberty LifeSong Ministries
Pastor Paul Lintern, Mansfield Southside Christian
Pastor Hank Webb, Mansfield Belmont Community
Pastor Glenn Phillips, Hillside First Church of GOD
Pastor Clint Zeigler, Mansfield Sovereign Christ
Pastor John Campos, Bowman St. Church GOD
Pastor Dave Guild, Mansfield Foursquare Church
Deacon Derrell Hall, Mansfield Holiness Chapel
Pastor Chris Spencer, Mansfield Peoples' Baptist
Pastor William Cole, Mansfield Recovery Church
Pastor Jim Johnson, Mansfield Grace Temple
Elder Henry Bradley, New Community Temple COGIC