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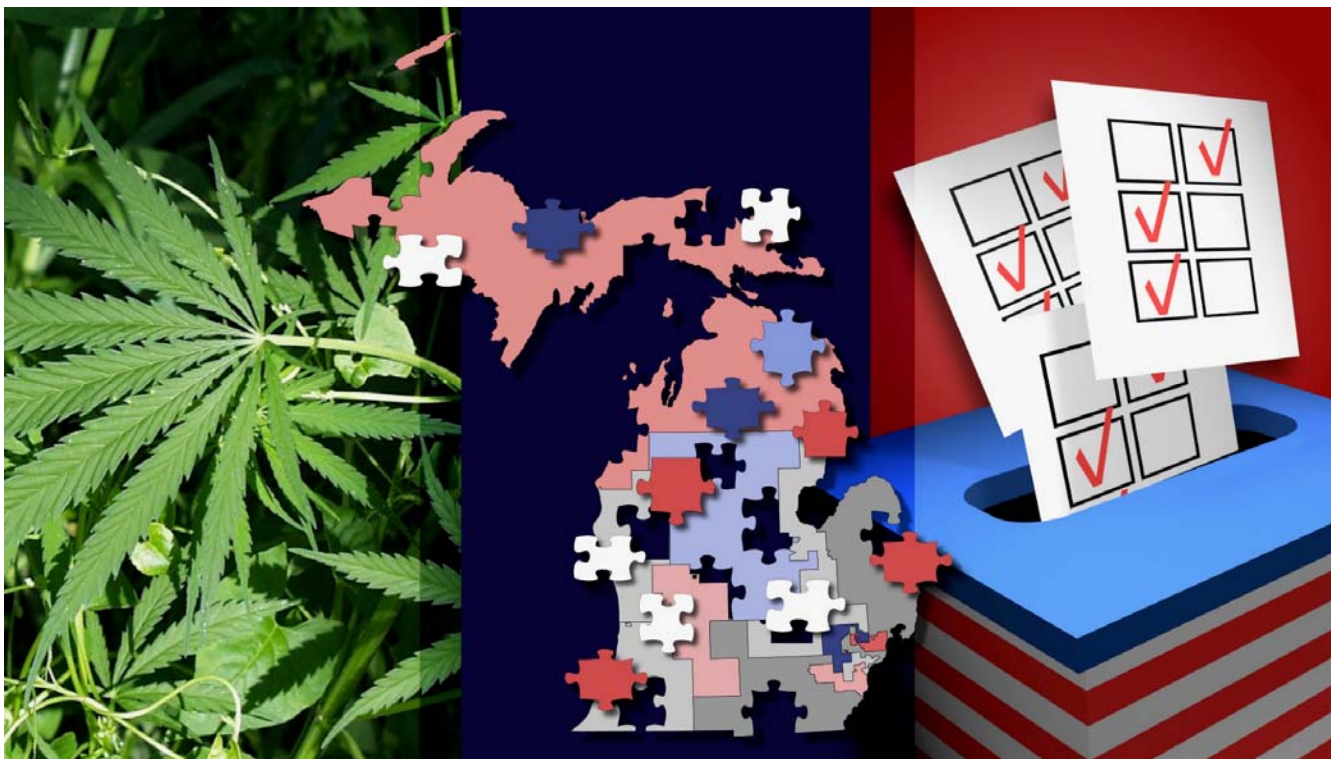


November 2018 Statewide Ballot Issues

Proposal 3 – Voting Rights

Webinar - October 18, 2018
Craig Thiel, Research Director

Access our analyses, official ballot language, PowerPoint slides, and recorded webinars: crcmich.org/ballot-issues



Citizens Research Council

- Founded in 1916
- Statewide
- Non-partisan
- Private not-for-profit
- Promotes sound policy for state and local governments through factual research – accurate, independent and objective
- Relies on charitable contributions from Michigan foundations, businesses, and individuals
- *www.crcmich.org*

Craig Thiel, Research Director



- Work Experience
 - 2006 - present: CRC
 - 1997 – 2006: House and Senate Fiscal
 - 1995 - 1997: Secretary of State
- Policy Background
 - State budget and taxation
 - K-12 education
 - Transportation
 - Inter-governmental relations
- Education
 - MPA, Wayne State University
 - BA, Kalamazoo College

Proposal 3

Voting Rights

Ballot Language

A proposal to authorize automatic and Election Day voter registration, no-reason absentee voting, and straight ticket voting; and add current legal requirements for military and overseas voting and postelection audits to the Michigan Constitution

This proposed constitutional amendment would allow a United States citizen who is qualified to vote in Michigan to:

- Become automatically registered to vote when applying for, updating or renewing a driver's license or state-issued personal identification card, unless the person declines.
- Simultaneously register to vote with proof of residency and obtain a ballot during the 2-week period prior to an election, up to and including Election Day.
- Obtain an absent voter ballot without providing a reason.
- Cast a straight-ticket vote for all candidates of a particular political party when voting in a partisan general election.

Should this proposal be adopted? YES NO

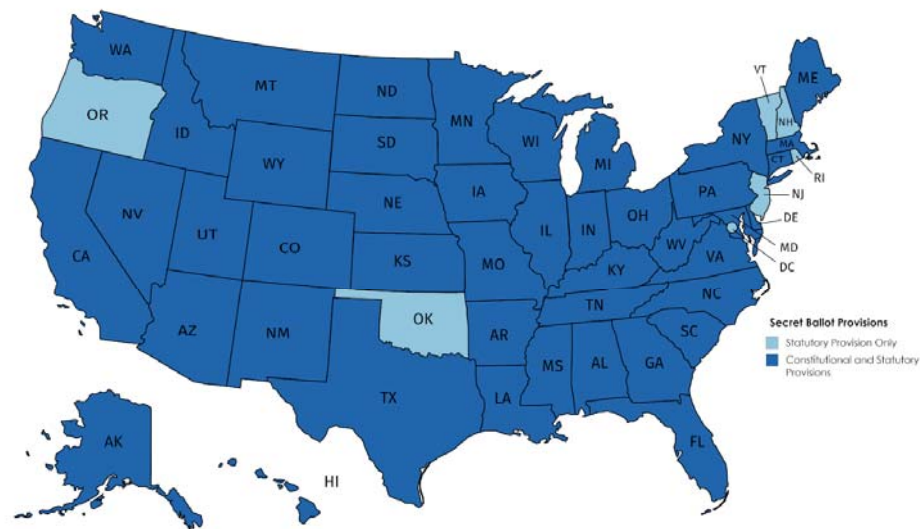
Motivations Behind the Proposal

- Promote the Vote – ballot committee
- Heightened interest in voting, especially after the 2016 election
- Lack of progress in getting policies through Republican-controlled legislature (e.g., no reason absentee voting)
- Undo recent policy changes enacted by legislature (e.g., ban on straight-ticket voting)
- Protect certain voting procedures and processes from future legislative changes

What's in the Proposal?

- Amend Article II (elections), Section 4 of Michigan Constitution
 - Protect the right to a secret ballot - *existing*
 - Ensure military service members and overseas voters get their ballots in time for their votes to count -*existing*
 - Provide voters with the option to vote straight party – *new (sort of)*
 - Automatically register citizens to vote at the Secretary of State's office unless the citizen declines -*new*
 - Allow a citizen to register to vote anytime with proof of residency – *new*
 - Provide all registered voters access to an absentee ballot for any reason - *new*
 - Ensure the accuracy and integrity of elections by auditing election results - *existing*

Secret Ballot



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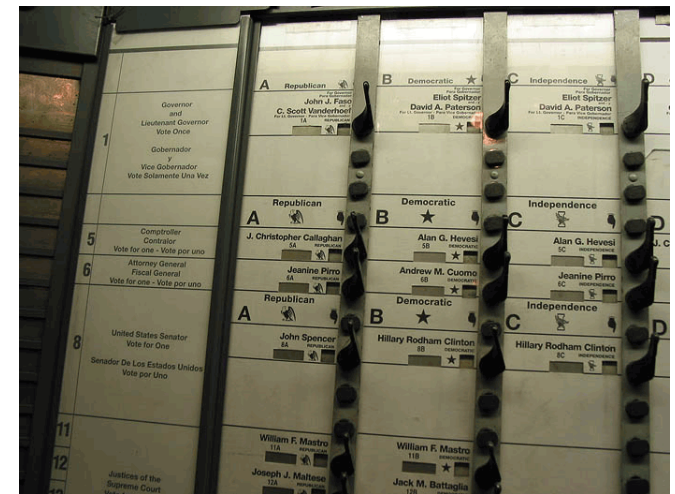
- 50 states and DC protect the secret ballot in some form
 - 44 (including MI) in their constitutions
 - 6 in at least one statute
- Voters can waive secrecy in other states when they vote using fax, email or Internet
- Provision already in Michigan Constitution

Overseas Voting Deadline

- Requirements already exist in federal law
- The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986 (UOCAVA)
 - Established a set of guidelines for states to follow when providing ballots to those not at home to vote
- Amended in Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act of 2009 (MOVE Act)
 - Required states to send out absentee ballots to UOCAVA voters at least 45 days prior to Election Day
- Putting into state constitution will make no functional difference

Straight-Party Voting

- General election ballot consist of three sections
 - Partisan (President, Governor, Congress, Legislature, county commissioners, etc.)
 - Non-partisan (judicial, school board, etc.)
 - Ballot questions (initiatives, bond authorization, local millages, etc.)
- Allows voter to make a single selection for all candidates
- Authorized in Michigan since 1891
- Republican-controlled legislatures have tried to ban
 - 1964 and 2002 bans – reversed by referendum
 - 2015 ban – currently in effect
- Past analysis shows common use by voters throughout the state voting for both parties

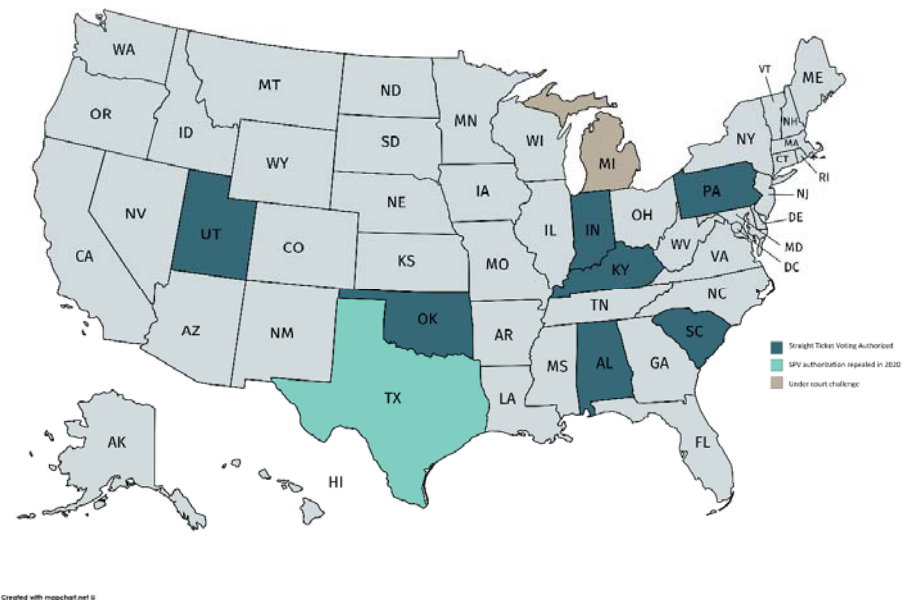


Straight-Party Voting Experience in 2000

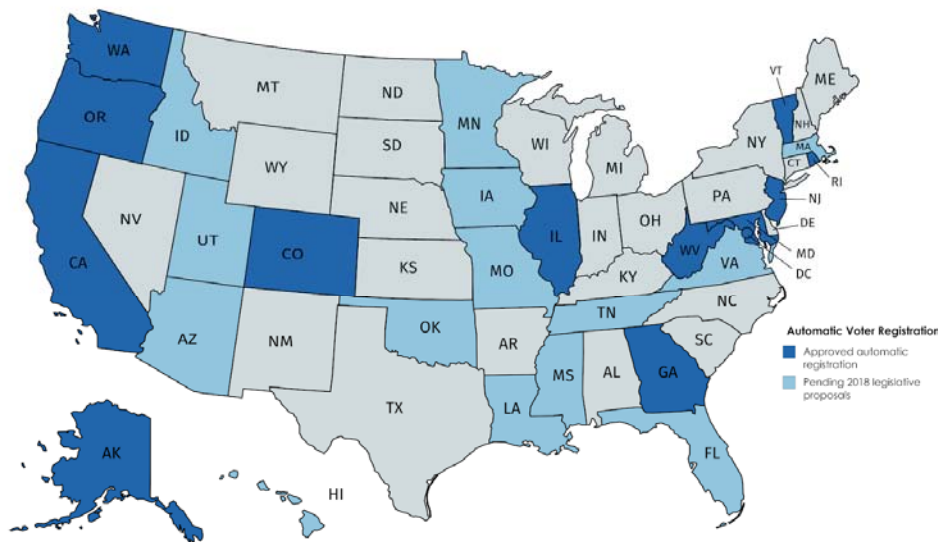
	Total Votes Cast	Straight Ticket Votes		Party Leaning for Those That Voted "Straight-Party"			
		Number	Percent of Total	How Many Republican	Percent Republican	How Many Democrat	Percent Democrat
Detroit	300,478	210,936	70.2%	9,315	4.4%	201,621	95.6%
Grand Rapids	74,645	39,083	52.4%	17,824	45.6%	21,259	54.4%
Farmington Hills	40,699	18,531	45.5%	9,361	50.5%	8,928	48.2%
Marquette	8,066	2,577	31.9%	909	35.3%	1,661	64.5%
Berrien	65,685	34,598	52.7%	19,952	57.7%	14,250	41.2%
Calhoun	54,658	24,324	44.5%	11,265	46.3%	12,696	52.2%
Charlevoix	12,713	4,912	38.6%	2,913	59.3%	1,859	37.8%
Dickinson	12,952	3,712	28.7%	1,465	39.5%	2,172	58.5%
Genesee	194,629	97,232	50.0%	24,852	25.6%	71,041	73.1%
Gogebic	8,491	2,845	33.5%	818	28.8%	1,970	69.2%
Ingham	123,664	45,863	37.1%	17,288	37.7%	27,779	60.6%
Kalamazoo	102,377	45,590	44.5%	23,981	52.6%	20,890	45.8%
Kent	252,455	130,612	51.7%	82,358	63.1%	46,928	35.9%
Lake	4,824	1,575	32.6%	513	32.6%	1,025	65.1%
Livingston	76,084	28,525	37.5%	18,691	65.5%	9,320	32.7%
Midland	39,352	15,237	38.7%	9,403	61.7%	5,598	36.7%
Monroe	62,307	21,094	33.9%	7,956	37.7%	12,840	60.9%
Ottawa	111,460	64,975	58.3%	51,533	79.3%	12,905	19.9%
Presque Isle	7,286	2,089	28.7%	979	46.9%	1,105	52.9%
Sanilac	18,726	8,606	46.0%	5,342	62.1%	3,142	36.5%
Washtenaw	145,974	60,604	41.5%	21,867	36.1%	38,737	63.9%

Use of Straight-Party Voting in Other States

- 8 states allow SPV
 - Texas repealed in 2017, takes effect in 2020
- Number of states with SPV has been declining
 - Illinois abolished in 1997
 - Wisconsin abolished in 2011



Automatic Voter Registration

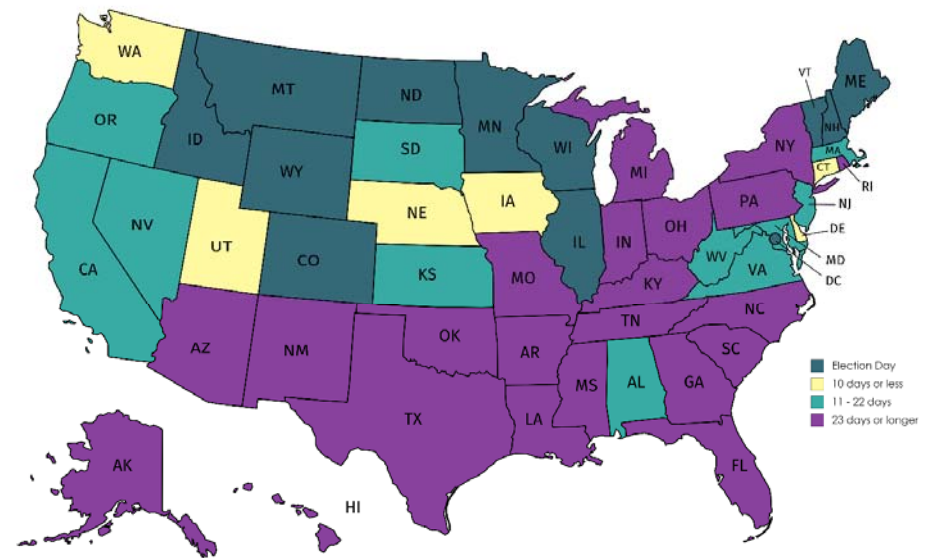


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- Registration would occur with interaction with the Secretary of State for drive license or ID card transactions
 - Change from “opt-in” to “opt-out”
- Does not mean more people will vote
 - Voting is a two-step process:
 - Registration
 - Voting
- 12 states + DC have adopted automatic voter registration
 - None have placed right in constitution

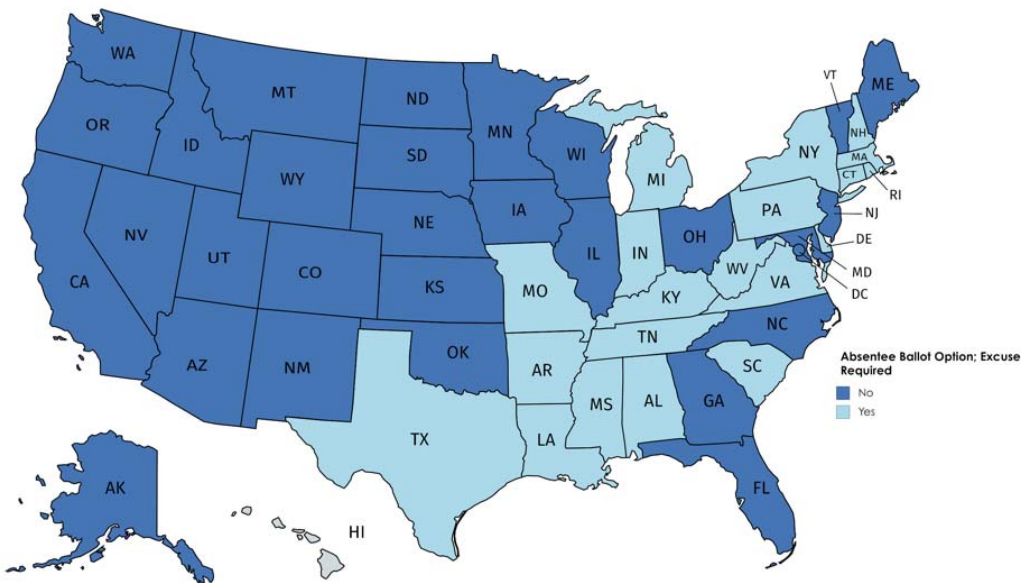
Anytime Voter Registration

- Eligible Michigan residents would have to be registered 15 days prior to election (mail-in)
 - Federal law establishes a maximum 30-day deadline
 - Currently, deadline is 30 days
 - Many states have longer periods
- Allow Election Day registration (in-person)
 - 15 states + DC have Election Day registration



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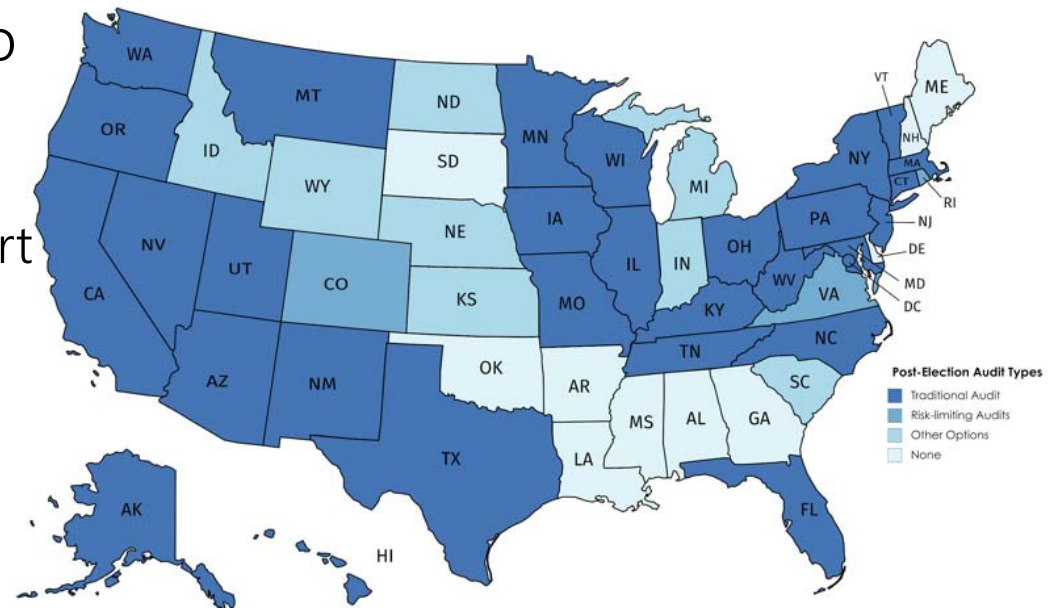
No Reason Absentee Ballot



- Current Michigan law allows only six reasons for obtaining an absentee ballot
- 37 states and DC provide more opportunities to vote before election day
- Increases voter participation

Auditing Statewide Election Results

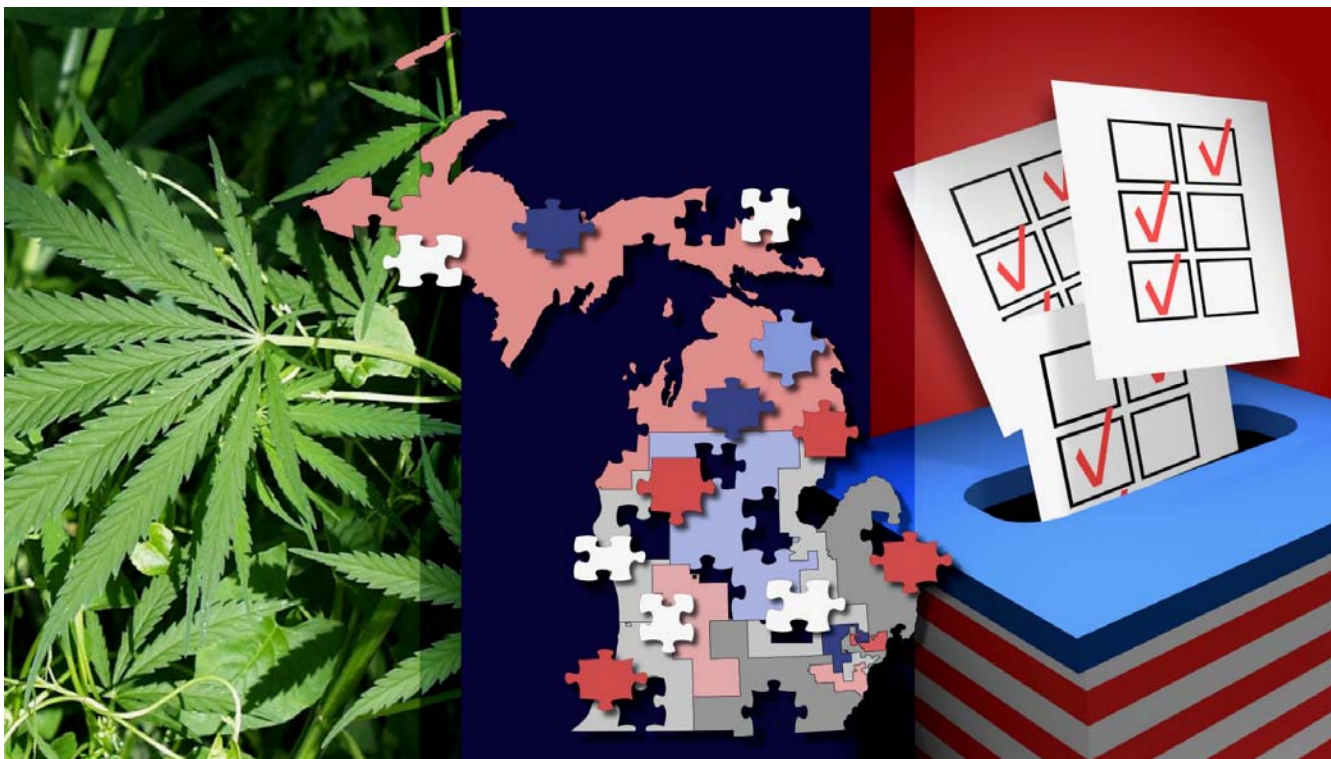
- Proposal would create right to post-election audit of result
 - Different from recount
 - Post 2016 election recount effort revealed many problems
- Proposal would require statutory implementation
- Michigan law currently allows audits



Proposal 3 Considerations

- Some issues (secret ballot, overseas voting) are time-tested and uncontroversial
 - Many are settled and currently contained within Michigan law
- Other issues have been the subject of public debate for decades
 - Proposals will make it easier to register to vote, vote, and ensure the integrity of the voting franchise
- Key Issue – whether these policies should be enshrined in the state’s fundamental law – the state constitution
 - More difficult to modify or remove them (can be good or bad)
 - Insulates them from legislative responsibility and discretion

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