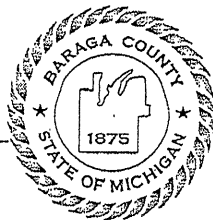


Joseph P. O'Leary

Baraga County Prosecuting Attorney



County Courthouse

16 N Third Street ♦ L'Anse, Michigan 49946
906.524.5440 ♦ Fax 906.524.5832

To: All media
From: Joseph P. O'Leary
Baraga County Prosecuting Attorney
Re: Making or delivering methamphetamine-no plea bargains.
Date: February 6, 2023

Greetings,

Plea bargains are an integral part of criminal proceedings in the United States. Indeed, although frequently misunderstood and disliked, numerous studies have demonstrated that without plea bargains the entire criminal justice system would collapse under its own weight. Thus my office, like every other prosecutor's office in Michigan and beyond, makes use of plea bargains as a method of achieving justice for victims and holding perpetrators accountable for their actions in a cost-effective, timely manner.

There are many factors which go into deciding whether or not to use a plea bargain such as the incident itself, the court-admissible evidence available to the prosecution, the willingness of witnesses and victims to cooperate and testify, the prior relationship between defendants and victims, the nature of the underlying transaction(s) which led to the incident, and many other relevant factors. If and when a plea bargain is offered and accepted the result is a word which all prosecutors like to hear: "Guilty".

During the last few years, however, Baraga County and virtually all counties nationwide have experienced an insidious scourge which is threatening to overwhelm law-enforcement and which is utterly devastating to individuals, families and communities. That scourge can be summed up in one word: Methamphetamine. This drug is wildly addictive and destructive to the individuals who fall under its spell. It is comprised of highly toxic ingredients which attack healthy human tissues and organs in too many ways to list. Methamphetamine also negatively impacts users' higher intellectual functioning, such as the ability to logically choose between right and wrong, between healthy and unhealthy, between family/friends and those who promote its use and abuse for profit.

Enough is enough. I have concluded that something must change in our approach to this scourge. Accordingly I hereby give notice to all who might choose to manufacture and/or deliver methamphetamine in Baraga County that, effective tomorrow February 7, 2023, anyone who engages in these crimes will not be offered plea bargains of any kind and must risk the full penalties afforded by Michigan law.