

Election law injunction relieves many

LANSING (AP) — An information freeze on local and school officials is thawing after a federal judge put a preliminary injunction on a new Michigan election law that critics called a “gag order.”

The injunction was a relief to many local and school officials fearful of legal repercussions for distributing information about upcoming ballot proposals. Gov. Rick Snyder had signed the legislation into law early this year.

Some local officials say they're once again holding

public meetings, talking to media and distributing information about some of more than 100 upcoming money-related local ballot proposals up for vote. Others said the law only stopped them from using taxpayer money for mass mailing, robo calls and TV or radio advertising campaigns.

The law confused many. Now that the injunction is in place, some local officials are rushing to spread the word about their city, county or township proposals.

Dickinson County Clerk

Dolly Cook said she's scrambling to inform voters about 12 proposals. That includes a 911 dispatch millage renewal, a service that can't function without tax money.

“We do need to get (information) out, like I'm on the radio once a month,” Cook said. “And man, I'll tell you what, when they put that out I didn't say a word because you're looking at a \$20,000 fine. I'm glad the injunction is there.”

Benton Harbor Area Schools has a \$6.062 million millage renewal re-

quest on the ballot. Chief Financial Officer Scott Johnson for the Berrien Regional Education Service Agency said the agency is “seriously considering” sending information about the proposal with the injunction in place.

Superintendents from Pontiac School District and Pittsford Area Schools also say they're happy: The Pontiac School District has a \$27.6 million millage renewal proposal, and Pittsford has several bonding

proposals.

The new law stopped them and other local governments from distributing information about upcoming ballot proposals 60 days before an election through mass mailing campaigns, robo calls and television or radio ads. The law was meant to curb the use of taxpayer money to spread biased interpretations of proposals, a practice that supporters of the change called “electioneering.”