

National Alliance Of State Drug Enforcement Agencies

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The Ecstasy Prevention Act of 2001 H.R. 2582 / S. 1208

The National Alliance of State Drug Enforcement Agencies has been in existence since 1975. Its member agencies are State Level Drug Enforcement Agencies from the nation's state police, highway patrol departments, or from each state's agency responsible for statewide criminal investigations. The working members of NASDEA come from Command Level staff. All fifty states are represented within NASDEA.

Summary of NASDEA Position

The Ecstasy Prevention Act of 2001 (H.R. 2582/S. 1208) provides for the development of a coordinated strategy of prevention, treatment and enforcement against the abuse of Ecstasy (MDMA) and other club drugs. This act directs the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to establish a Task Force of federal, state and local law enforcement officials along with substance abuse and public health officials who will design, implement and evaluate the strategy of the Federal Government with respect to Ecstasy, MDMA and emerging club drugs. The act further directs ONDCP to provide funding for prevention of ecstasy (MDMA) and emerging club drug abuse as well as funding for anti-Ecstasy law enforcement initiatives in high intensity drug trafficking areas. Research and evaluation by the National Institute on Drug Abuse would also be funded to document scientifically valid medical consequences to the use of ecstasy (MDMA).

The dramatic increase in the abuse of ecstasy (MDMA) and other emerging club drugs by our nation's youth demands an aggressive and effective strategy to combat this threat. It is the belief of NASDEA that this act will effectively address the prevention, treatment and enforcement issues associated with ecstasy (MDMA) abuse. This act provides for the coalition of federal, state, and local efforts through funding and collaboration. **NASDEA strongly supports passage of the Ecstasy Prevention Act of 2001.**

Background Information

The proliferation of ecstasy (MDMA) and other emerging club drug use by teenagers and young adults across our country has reached epidemic proportions. Marketed as safe and harmless by drug legalization proponents at organized “alcohol-free” dances called “Raves”, the use of 3,4-methylenedioxy methamphetamine (referred to as ecstasy or MDMA, has resulted in overdoses and deaths throughout the country. Some research has indicated that the use of ecstasy (MDMA) can cause long term and perhaps permanent damage to the serotonin system of the brain, as well as long-term problems with learning and memory.

The skyrocketing demand for this drug has led to a 400 percent increase in illegal importation of MDMA, as evidenced from seizures by United States Customs Service. As a result, state and local law enforcement agencies throughout the United States are faced with training and law enforcement issues associated with this and other club drugs being specifically marketed to our nation’s youth. To stem the explosive abuse of ecstasy (MDMA) an immediate and effective strategy encompassing prevention, treatment and enforcement is needed.

Prevention

NASDEA is committed to the realization that prevention is one of the three critical components in eliminating drug abuse. The targeted marketing strategy of ecstasy (MDMA) to our youth demands an effective prevention message that provides factual information in such a way that they may make informed decisions. The ‘Ecstasy Prevention Act of 2001 provides for the Office of National Drug Control Policy to provide \$7 million in funding for fiscal year 2002, to insure that the national media campaign addressed the reduction and prevention of abuse of MDMA and other emerging club drugs among young people in the United States. The act provides that funding, as deemed necessary, for each of the fiscal years 2003 through 2005 would also be provided.

Local initiatives aimed at prevention of ecstasy abuse in communities are a key component of any successful strategy, and NASDEA strongly supports these prevention efforts. This act would amend Section 506B© of Title V of the Public Health Service Act to give priority to grant applications for ecstasy abuse prevention to communities that have taken measures to combat club drug use. It would further permit priority grants to be made on a pass-through basis to eligible communities.

Treatment

NASDEA is also aware that effective treatment programs, based on scientifically valid medical data, must also be available for those who suffer from drug abuse. This act directs the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to conduct research that evaluates the effects that MDMA use can have on an individual’s health and to document those research findings and conclusions that are scientifically valid and identify such medical consequences. The act provides that the NIDA Director will provide an interim report on the progress and any current findings not later than January 1, 2003, and a final report to the Congress not later than January 1, 2004.

Additionally, the act directs ONDCP to commission a drug test for MDMA, which would meet the standards for the Federal workplace. NASDEA strongly supports the incorporation of efforts to eliminate MDMA use in drug-free workplaces.

Law Enforcement

The third and crucial segment of any successful drug abuse strategy is an aggressive and effective law enforcement effort directed at those who are responsible for trafficking drugs in our country. With respect to MDMA, this effort must involve coordinated federal, state and local law enforcement. Currently, international drug trafficking organizations are illegally importing unprecedented quantities of MDMA into the United States. At the same time, local and regional trafficking organizations are distributing MDMA to our youth in communities throughout the country. This act provides for funding through the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) for anti-ecstasy law enforcement initiatives in high intensity drug trafficking areas. This funding would be in support of investigative costs, intelligence enhancements, technology improvements and training. Such funding would be in the amount of \$15 million for fiscal year 2002, with additional sums as deemed necessary for each of the fiscal years 2003 through 2005. NASDEA supports the concept of funding through multi-agency HIDTA initiatives composed of coordinated federal, state and local law enforcement resources.

Collaboration

For any drug strategy to be effective, it must represent the concerns, viewpoints and contributions of the entire community. From the anti-drug abuse arena, that community consists of prevention, treatment and law enforcement professionals. The law enforcement community is comprised of federal, state and local law enforcement officials. Each has a unique viewpoint and contribution to be made in the issue of ecstasy (MDMA) abuse. This act would direct ONDCP to establish a Task Force comprised of representatives of each of these disciplines and governmental agencies to design, implement and evaluate the education, prevention and treatment practices and strategies of the Federal Government with respect to Ecstasy (MDMA) and emerging club drugs. Additionally, this Task Force would study the club drug problem and report to Congress. The act would further fund this Task Force to conduct these activities for a period of three years. NASDEA strongly supports the concept of collaboration among each discipline and level of government to address strategies that will impact our communities.