

National Alliance Of State Drug Enforcement Agencies

President

Charles E. Bush
Michigan State Police

Vice President

H. C. Davis
Virginia State Police

Secretary

Roy E. McKinney
Maine Drug Enforcement Agency

Treasurer

Larry Turner
Indiana State Police

Board Counsel

John Kemner
Florida Department of Law Enforcement



Post Office Box 16278
Austin, Texas 78761

Sergeant-At-Arms

James F. Keathley
Missouri State Highway Patrol

Past President

Peter F. Warren
Connecticut State Police

Members At Large

Tyree Blocker
Pennsylvania State Police

Steven M. Fermon
Illinois State Police

Bobby Grimes
Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics

Christy McCampbell
California Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement

Anti-Drug Legalization Act, H.R. 196

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 National Alliance of State Drug Enforcement Agencies strongly supports House Resolution 196, prohibiting federally sponsored research pertaining to the legalization of drugs. This organization has witnessed first-hand the crime, abuse and personal harm that results from the use of illegal drugs. This organization has also closely followed the progress of the ballot initiatives in California, Arizona, and other states seeking to legalize the use of marijuana under a doctor's supervision. These initiatives, as well as other bills that attempt to legalize drugs or allow research in support of this movement are detrimental to the health and welfare of the public. NASDEA has taken a strong stand, and will continue to oppose any initiative designed to legalize, in any manner, these harmful and illegal substances. The following are the reasons for NASDEA's stance on this subject:

NASDEA is unequivocally opposed to the legalization of or the research pertaining to the legalization of illicit drugs (including marijuana, hemp, and hemp seed oil). Legalization of drugs in any form would likely: 1) reduce the perception of the risks and dangers of drug use; 2) increase the availability of and access to harmful drugs; 3) increase demand, use, abuse, and addiction to dangerous drugs; and 4) remove the social sanction against drug abuse that is reinforced in legislation and public education programs.

The present social problems in the United States, including crime, health, and poverty, are substantial and will only be exacerbated if drugs are legalized. The arguments for legalization are a sad and bitter offering to the most vulnerable segment of our population. Legalization would increase risks and costs to individuals, families, and communities, indeed, to every part of the nation, without compensating benefits. Any proposal with the potential to impact so negatively upon our country is unacceptable. As public policy, such a proposal is fundamentally flawed.

First and foremost, as the front-line commanders of drug enforcement units, we believe that crime, violence, and drug use go hand-in-hand. The use of drugs, especially cocaine, crack, methamphetamine, and PCP, is often associated with violent criminal behavior. There is ample evidence that clearly demonstrates the link between drugs, violence, and crime. Additionally, links between alcohol, a currently legal substance, and crime are well documented. We can attest to the fact that alcohol plays a significant role in domestic violence cases. Drug use would only swell the statistics regarding crime, even if the drugs were legally purchased. Data from the National Institute of Justice (April, 1999) International Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program underscores the crime-drug link. Among detained arrestees in the United States, 68.3 percent tested positive for marijuana, opiates, cocaine, amphetamines, benzodiazepines, or methadone.

Secondly, we believe that legalization of drugs will lead to increased use and increased addiction levels. For instance, early in the 20th Century, drugs were plentiful, cheap, and legal in the United States. Some could even be bought from catalogs. But Americans realized that these legalized drugs were harmful to individuals and society, and drug laws were enacted. Legalization proponents would have these statutes repealed and make drugs like opium readily available. According to Dr. Herbert Kleber, the prominent Yale University Psychiatrist and former Demand Reduction Deputy Director at the Office of National Drug Control Policy (currently with the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University), "There are over 50 million nicotine addicts, 18 million alcoholics or problem drinkers, and fewer than 2 million cocaine addicts in the United States. Cocaine is a much more addictive drug than alcohol. If cocaine were legally available, as alcohol and nicotine are now, the number of cocaine abusers would probably rise to a point somewhere between the number of users of the other two agents, perhaps 20 to 25 million...the number of compulsive users might be nine times higher...than the current number. When drugs have been widely available - as ...cocaine was at the turn of the century - both use and addiction have risen."

England's experience with legalization, when heroin was widely available, shows that use and addiction increase. When Great Britain allowed doctors to prescribe heroin to addicts, there was an explosion in the rate of use, and by the mid - 1980's known addiction rates were increasing by about 30 percent a year. According to the Lancet, the respected British medical journal (Lancet, January 9, 1982), 2,657 heroin addicts were registered in 1970 compared with 5,107 in 1980.

Lastly, NASDEA believes that any revenues generated by taxing legalized drugs would quickly evaporate in light of the increased social costs. A favorite argument in support of legalization is that education, health care, road building, and a wide array of other worthwhile causes would benefit from the taxes that could be raised by legalizing drugs and then taxing them. The reality is that health and societal costs of drug legalization would increase. Drug treatment costs, hospitalization for long-term drug-related disease, and treatment of the consequences of family violence would further burden our already strapped health care system. There is also real reason to believe that liability suits would be brought against manufacturers and distributors of drugs as damages to individuals increased, thereby increasing the cost of products. One has only to look at the magnitude of the tobacco settlement for proof of this possibility. And even though the cost of these settlements will largely be passed on to the end consumer, what corporation would become involved in the manufacture and distribution of far more dangerous substances if currently illicit substances were legalized, and face similar legal action? In terms of the social costs of legalization, Dr. William Olson, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics Matters, provided the following:

- 25-60 percent of the homeless are addicts, whose homelessness is in large part the result of addiction and their inability to manage money or make rational, reasonable decisions. They are increasingly supported at public expense.
- 75-80 percent of the 1.2 - 1.5 million teenage runaways are substance abusers, and not because prohibition made them use drugs or run away.
- 30-50 percent of mental patients are chemical abusers, 50-60 percent of which use crack and cocaine. They are largely on public support.
- As many as 11 percent of young mothers use drugs during pregnancy.
- 2.5 percent of all live births, some 100,000 infants are born addicted to cocaine. They have lifelong learning disabilities and emotional problems.
- \$50 billion is devoted annually to dealing with the health care costs of drug addiction and its collateral costs. These costs will not disappear with legalization.

In summary, it is for these and other reasons that the National Alliance of State Drug Enforcement Agencies strongly supports H.R. 196, which was introduced to prohibit federally sponsored research pertaining to the legalization of drugs. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, there have already been *more than 10,000* scientific studies conducted that prove marijuana is a harmful and addictive drug. No more of the taxpayers' hard earned money should be spent to prove the same thing.