Students for Sensible Drug Policy

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

NO MORE DRUG WAR
THE WAR ON DRUGS IS
A WAR ON
US
When Sam Walker returned from his combat tour in Afghanistan to attend courses at his local public community college — Linn State Technical College in Missouri — in summer 2011, administrators told him they had instituted a new random student drug-testing policy. Sam’s first call was to SSDP. We called the president of the college and promised to sue the school’s trustees if they proceeded with the planned drug-testing program. Our staff and volunteers then worked to recruit and coordinate plaintiffs, and SSDP’s team of scrappy, pro-bono lawyers and law students drafted an amicus brief in the case. A federal judge blocked the program.

Our small staff does a lot with very little resources. That’s because SSDP is not six people in a headquarters office. The staff and Board of Directors serve as stewards of a movement composed of thousands of young people around the world. SSDP is made up of people who have felt the power of working together to end the war on drugs.

SSDP board members are elected and selected by their peers, making SSDP uniquely positioned as a democratic organization where representatives speak for the constituents who elected them. Since SSDP is a student-run organization — our bylaws require that current students constitute a super-majority of directors on our board — we benefit from constant contact with and feedback from our intended constituency.

We speak truth to power and we bring people together. We create a safe space for students of all political stripes to have honest conversations. We know that the status quo doesn’t work and that we’re at the brink of a historic shift, and we’re not afraid to talk about it. To end the drug war, we’re passing on the skills, training, and know-how to students all over the world.

Thank you for being part of our movement.

Sincerely,

Aaron Houston
Executive Director
22 CANDLESLIGHT VIGILS COMMENORATE THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF NIXON’S “WAR ON DRUGS”

Friday, June 17, 2011, marked the 40th anniversary of President Richard Nixon’s declaration of the “war on drugs.” Students for Sensible Drug Policy, in partnership with the Drug Policy Alliance, organized a nationwide day of action to highlight the impacts of this ill-fated war. Candlelight vigils were organized in more than 20 cities across the world, including one in Mexico City, where our students remembered victims of the war on drugs and raised awareness about the need for reform.

NYCC SSDP ADOPTS A HIGHWAY

In the summer of 2011, our chapter leaders at Northern Virginia Community College adopted a highway in northern Virginia. Just like many other community groups and businesses have done to show their commitment to social good, they’re directly giving back to their local community by keeping a section of this highway clean. Also, this is quite possibly the first time that the words “Students for Sensible Drug Policy” appears on a government sign.

LEGALIZE IT! PARTNERSHIP WITH PETER TOSH FAMILY; THE WIRE ACTORS RECOGNIZE U.S. REP. JARED POLIS AND NIAMBE TOSH

SSDP and actor Tray Cheney (“Poot”) of The Wire, honored Niambe Tosh, daughter of legendary singer and activist Peter Tosh and U.S. Rep. Jared Polis of the drug policy reform issue. was a huge success, educating 350-400 student attendees about both sides hosted a debate between executive Director of the Drug policy alliance Ethan to kick off the fall 2011 semester, our university of arkanasas SSDP chapter (D-Co) for their extraordinary efforts in the fight to legalize marijuana. SSDP’s honorees have been committed advocates to the cause. On September 14, SSDP and actor tray Cheney (“poot”) of the Wire, honored niambe tosh, u. ARKANSAS SSDP HOSTS DRUG POLICY DEBATE

In the wake of recent attacks on medical marijuana providers and patients by multiple branches of the federal government, including the April 16, 2012 raids on Oaksterdam University in Oakland, CA, SSDP joined with five other national drug policy reform organizations to appeal to President Obama and his administration to follow its own previously stated policies respecting state medical marijuana laws. Our supporters sent over 1,000 letters to the President urging him to bring an end to the federal government’s ongoing campaign to undermine state efforts to regulate safe and legal access to medical marijuana for patients who rely on it.

TAKING ACTION TO END OBAMA’S WAR ON MEDICAL MARIJUANA

In March 2012 at the 13th Annual International Students for Sensible Drug Policy Conference in Denver, Colorado, we asked our students and supporters to answer the question: “Why are you fighting to end the war on drugs?” Nearly 60 conference attendees provided their response on video as part of our story booth. We compiled the most powerful responses into a two and a half minute video that can be viewed on SSDP’s Youtube channel.

SSDP AND THE ACLU BLOCK STUDENT DRUG TESTING AT LINN TECH

When a student at Linn State Technical College in Linn, Missouri—a public college—heard that his school was going to randomly drug test him in the fall of 2011, he called us first. Our staff called the president of the college and promised to sue him if he proceeded with his program. We were pleased to work with the ACLU to coordinate plaintiffs. And our team of scrappy, pro-bono lawyers and law students who serve on our student-led board of directors drafted SSDP’s amicus brief in the case.

VIDEO: “WHY ARE YOU FIGHTING THE WAR ON DRUGS?”

In March 2012 at the 13th Annual International Students for Sensible Drug Policy Conference in Denver, Colorado, we asked our students and supporters to answer the question: “Why are you fighting to end the war on drugs?” Nearly 60 conference attendees provided their response on video as part of our story booth. We compiled the most powerful responses into a two and a half minute video that can be viewed on SSDP’s Youtube channel.

AKCELELS A TRIPLE-THREAT HAWAIIAN HERO

In March 2012, SSDP coordinated a press conference with the office of Sens. Mazie Hirono (D-HI) to discuss the need for marijuana reform. Our Hawaiian students for Sensible Drug Policy chapter, SSDP Hawaii, organized the event with the assistance of the Drug Policy Alliance and the law firm of Munger Tolles & Olson.

ssdp responds to drug czar’s action to highlight the impacts of this ill-fated war. Candlelight vigils were organized in more than 20 cities across the world, including one in Mexico City, where our students remembered victims of the war on drugs and raised awareness about the need for reform.
On July 20, 2011, New York Governor Cuomo signed into law a statewide 911 Good Samaritan Policy. SSDP members met with dozens of state officials to lobby for A2662C, which gives legal amnesty to individuals who are in need medical treatment resulting from drug or alcohol use, as well as to individuals who seek help for someone else in need of medical assistance resulting from drug or alcohol use. The passage of this bill was the culmination of a collaborative effort of the Drug Policy Alliance (DPA), Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP), and the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (LICADD).

On June 22, 2011, the first marijuana legalization bill was introduced in Congress. H.R. 2306, the Ending Federal Marijuana Prohibition Act of 2011, is a bi-partisan bill introduced by Congressmen Barney Frank and Ron Paul that would allow states to legalize and regulate marijuana without federal interference. Through our online action center, we generated 6,267 letters to Congress in support of H.R. 2306, more than half of which were sent within 24 hours of the bill’s introduction.

During our 2011 Training Conference and lobby day, we focused on asking Congress to defund the White House’s failed National Anti-Drug Media Campaign. SSDP has been advocating for the campaign to be eliminated since 2006, but we’ve never seen a chamber of Congress actually cut funding for the program — until now. In July 2011, we learned that a House committee eliminated all funding for the program.

In March 2012, SSDP student and youth representatives from Mexico, Colombia and Poland attended the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs with special consultative status. Although these policies disproportionately affect them, youth are rarely in attendance at these high-level policy meetings. SSDP is committed to changing that. The SSDP delegation screened a video produced by chapters in seven countries that highlighted how the drug war impacts young people. SSDP, along with partners, will continue to campaign for greater youth voice at the United Nations.

On February 26, 2012 Illinois became the fifth state to enact a “Call 911 Good Samaritan Policy” when Governor Quinn signed S.B. 1701 into law. Our students and allies played an essential role in advocating for this legislation, including those at Northern Illinois University and Roosevelt University.

On June 5, 2012 Connecticut became the 17th state to pass medical marijuana law. Connecticut SSDP students worked tirelessly to help gain support for this legislation. Our students worked to host rallies, coordinate student lobbying efforts, testified in front of lawmakers, and personally called members of the House and Senate to express their support for the bill.

On April 6th, 2012, Governor Rick Scott signed Florida’s 911 Good Samaritan Act (SB 278). Florida is now the 13th state to enact some form of Good Samaritan legislation. More specifically, Florida is now the 6th state to extend immunity to possession of controlled substances (joining NM, WA, CT, NY, and IL) and the 6th state to add help-seeking as a mitigating factor (joining NM, PA, MD, WA, UT, and IL). Our students and allies in Florida played an instrumental role in the passage of this important bill.

In January 2012, SSDP sent dozens of students to New Hampshire to attend the 2012 College Convention, a four-day gathering of college students and educators to discuss and shape the future of drug policy reform. This event was indeed defeated, we are proud to share that 3,426 letters to Congress were sent through SSDP’s online action center in just a few short days leading up to the vote.
GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney repeatedly dodged questions about medical marijuana, refusing to engage activists who took to the campaign trail in New Hampshire to press him on the issue.

Asked by a member of Students for Sensible Drug Policy about his views on the drug war, Romney demurred, referring his questioner to his website.

“It’s a long…It’s a long question,” Romney said at a rally in Bedrock on Jan 9. “It deserves a full answer, and not just in a photo line like this.”

**“MITT ROMNEY DUCKS MEDICAL MARIJUANA QUESTIONS”, The Huffington Post, January 10, 2012**

**Los Angeles Times**

“What better time than now to get the community together and discuss the failures of the drug policies?” said Rodrigo “Froggy” Vazquez, an event organizer and a member of the failures of the drug policies?”

**“RALLY URGES END TO WAR ON DRUGS”, Los Angeles Times, June 16, 2011**

**The New York Times**

Groups in favor of legalization seem to have made strides over the years in distancing themselves from the movement’s sometimes grungy past. In Richmond, Va, for example, about 300 people came to the city’s Monroe Park for a rally organized by a local chapter of Students for Sensible Drug Policy. And while there was a fair share of sandals and shorts, the event also attracted people like Kirkby Myers, a contractor for the Federal Aviation Administration and one of many gray-haired attendees.


**St. Louis Beacon**

The students for a Sensible Drug policy, Mcgoldrick, who is involved with Students for a Sensible Drug Policy, which advocates decriminalization of drug use.


**The Washington Post**

Students for Sensible Drug Policy are holding the candidates’ feet to the, ahem, fire on their favorite subject.

In a series of videos posted to YouTube, student volunteers have sought to prepare them for a world of work where such tests are common.

**“LAWSUITS TESTS UNIQUE DRUG-TESTING POLICY AT LINN STATE TECH”, St. Louis Beacon, Oct 17, 2011**

**Brown Daily Herald**

“Most of my friends are still unaware of its legal status as a medicine,” said Mcgoldrick, who is involved with Students for a Sensible Drug Policy, which advocates decriminalization of drug use.

**“NATIONAL DRUG SURVEY SHOWS BIG DROP IN METHAMPHETAMINE USE”, USA Today, September 8, 2011**

**Columbia Spectator**

“At the end of the day, our goal is to help save people’s lives. I know friends who really should have gotten medical attention but because they were worried about punishment, they didn’t seek it out,” Mcgoldrick, who is involved with Students for a Sensible Drug Policy, attended the hearing to testify in favor of the bill. Moffat, a herald opinions editor, Current laws regarding marijuana are ineffective, O’Dea told The Herald. There is no evidence that suggests decriminalization leads to higher use rates, and half the revenue generated from the new fines would help fund programs to educate minors about drug use, he said.


**USA Today**

Rebecca McGoldrick, 21, a Brown University senior smokes marijuana to get relief from pain and nausea caused by fibromyalgia.

**“GOOD SAMARITAN RULE NOW OFFICIAL POLICY”, Columbia Spectator, September 9, 2011**

“Most of my friends are still unaware of its legal status as a medicine,” said Mcgoldrick, who is involved with Students for a Sensible Drug Policy, which advocates decriminalization of drug use.


**USA Today**

“Most of my friends are still unaware of its legal status as a medicine,” said Mcgoldrick, who is involved with Students for a Sensible Drug Policy, which advocates decriminalization of drug use.

**“THESON OF FANS OF LIBERALIZED MARIJUANA LAWS”, The New York Times, April 21, 2012**

**The New York Times**

Before this school year began, Linn State Technical College didn’t have a drug-testing program or a chapter of the organization Students for Sensible Drug Policy. Now it has both, though a lawsuit prompted a federal judge to suspend the testing, at least temporarily. The college chapter of Students for Sensible Drug Policy didn’t have a drug-testing program when it was founded.


**Columbia Spectator**

“At the end of the day, our goal is to help save people’s lives. I know friends who really should have gotten medical attention but because they were worried about punishment, they didn’t seek it out,” Mcgoldrick, who is involved with Students for a Sensible Drug Policy, attended the hearing to testify in favor of the bill. Moffat, a herald opinions editor, Current laws regarding marijuana are ineffective, O’Dea told The Herald. There is no evidence that suggests decriminalization leads to higher use rates, and half the revenue generated from the new fines would help fund programs to educate minors about drug use, he said.


**USA Today**

Rebecca McGoldrick, 21, a Brown University senior smokes marijuana to get relief from pain and nausea caused by fibromyalgia.

**“GOOD SAMARITAN RULE NOW OFFICIAL POLICY”, Columbia Spectator, September 9, 2011**

“Most of my friends are still unaware of its legal status as a medicine,” said Mcgoldrick, who is involved with Students for a Sensible Drug Policy, which advocates decriminalization of drug use.


**USA Today**

Rebecca McGoldrick, 21, a Brown University senior smokes marijuana to get relief from pain and nausea caused by fibromyalgia.

**“GOOD SAMARITAN RULE NOW OFFICIAL POLICY”, Columbia Spectator, September 9, 2011**

“Most of my friends are still unaware of its legal status as a medicine,” said Mcgoldrick, who is involved with Students for a Sensible Drug Policy, which advocates decriminalization of drug use.


**USA Today**

Rebecca McGoldrick, 21, a Brown University senior smokes marijuana to get relief from pain and nausea caused by fibromyalgia.

**“GOOD SAMARITAN RULE NOW OFFICIAL POLICY”, Columbia Spectator, September 9, 2011**

“Most of my friends are still unaware of its legal status as a medicine,” said Mcgoldrick, who is involved with Students for a Sensible Drug Policy, which advocates decriminalization of drug use.
We have a much better sense of the quality and quantity of our chapters than we ever had before. In the past two years, in order to ensure consistency and quality across our more than 200 chapters, staff members have developed a four-part test to raise the bar for SSDP chapters. One notable part of that criteria is that each chapter is required to send SSDP’s headquarters a roster listing all active chapter members. We also look at the extent to which a chapter holds regular meetings, whether they are officially recognized by their school, and how frequently they host drug policy forums and leadership development trainings for chapter members.
SSDP2012: 13TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FOR SENSIBLE DRUG POLICY CONFERENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. | OCTOBER 21-22, 2011

More than 400 students, alumni, and supporters were in attendance at SSDP2012 this year.

New student board members were elected during SSDP Congress, where students also offered and debated resolutions regarding the priorities and direction of the organization.

We also collected dozens of video and photo testimonials through our “Story Booth” where participants told stories about why they’re fighting against the war on drugs.

Keynote speakers included Ethan Nadelmann, Rick Doblin, Kris Krane, Adam Smith, and Steve DeAngelo. The conference program included more than two dozen breakout sessions on a variety of topics, from “Finding the Leader Within You” to “Cannabusiness: From Activist to Entrepreneur.” View the entire program online at: conference.sdp.org

NORTHEAST REGIONAL SSDP CONFERENCE

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS | SEPTEMBER 30 – OCTOBER 2, 2011

The 2011 Northeast Regional Conference was held at Boston University and over 80 students attended a weekend filled with informative speakers and engaging training and discussions. Students from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and 5 different schools from the Boston area were in attendance.

The conference kicked off with an inspirational talk by Jack Cole, founder and former Executive Director of Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (LEAP). Next, students participated in two intensive training workshops: one on campus-based policy change led by SSDP staff and another on state-based policy change by Matt Simon, Former Executive Director New Hampshire Coalition for Common Sense Marijuana Policy.

Rick Doblin, Executive Director of the Multidisciplinary Association of Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) closed out the day. Doblin unveiled a work in progress that will help educate students on how to help each other in the event of a difficult psychedelic experience without causing the individual to panic. The students in attendance were really impressed with the level of professionalism in Rick’s work and many said this was their first exposure to such a field of study. The conference wrapped up on Sunday with the Cannabis Curriculum session led by John Dvorak, which outlined the future to such a field of study. The conference wrapped up on Sunday with the Cannabis Curriculum session led by John Dvorak, which outlined the future to such a field of study.

MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL SSDP CONFERENCE

ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA | OCTOBER 21-22, 2011

More than 50 students from all over the Mid-Atlantic region convened at the Northern Virginia Community College for the 2011 Mid-Atlantic Regional SSDP Conference. Chapter members traveled from Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and even as far away as Georgia to learn about advocacy from some of the most accomplished names in the movement.

On Friday, attendees participated in an intimate (albeit indirect) “fireside chat” with SSDP Executive Director Aaron Houston. On Saturday, the program was kicked off with “Achieving Reform,” led by Jasmine Tyler, Deputy Director of National Affairs for the Drug Policy Alliance, and Eric Sterling, Founder and President of the Criminal Justice Policy Foundation. Next, a panel entitled “Sister to Sister/Women in the Movement” — led by Sabrina Fenrick, NORML Women’s Alliance Coordinator, and Brooke Napier, SSDP alumna and former SSDP intern — educated students about the NORML Women’s Alliance Sister to Sister program, how women can be effective role models, and how to empower women with the connections and confidence to bring them into the drug policy reform movement. Keynote speaker and Candidate Delegate for Virginia’s 40th District, Dianne Blais closed out the day with a discussion on her stances on key issues like drug education, Good Samaritan Policies and how students can get involved with her campaign. Additional student-led workshops included “Online Organizing,” “Coalition Building,” “Graduate Student Organizing,” “Effective Leadership/Achieving Campus Reform,” and “Team Building Exercises.”

INTERNATIONAL DRUG POLICY REFORM CONFERENCE

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA | FEBRUARY 2-3, 2012

In February of 2012, dozens of students gathered at Florida State University for the first ever Florida Regional SSDP Conference. Sunday opened with an incredibly inspiring speech by Greg Newburn, Florida Policy Director of Families Against Mandatory Minimums. Later, the “Effective Leadership and Group Dynamics workshop,” led by chapter leaders from FSU and University of Miami engaged students in a discussion about what effective leadership is and how to harness the energy of chapter members. Students learned how to answer tough questions and how to build their ground up when up against opposing arguments during the “How to Answer Tough Questions about Drug Policy” workshop, led by two of our Florida chapter leaders. Later on, Jodi James, Executive Director of the Florida Cannabis Action Network, informed students about what’s happening in Florida drug policy reform and how SSDP can be a part of the effort. On Monday, conference attendees wrapped up the event with a trip to the Florida legislature, meeting with staffers for Senator Fasano and Senator Margolis to discuss their stances on medical marijuana and to provide them with important statistics and information to pass along to their colleagues.
WHY DONATE?

Having founded the Brown University chapter of SSDP, I have witnessed firsthand what a group of like-minded people can contribute to the betterment of society with a little coordination and lots of hard work. I also saw that many people on the outside had the resources to get to conferences and other events that cost money. SSDP for life!

Because the drug policy in this country needs to change and the upcoming generation of professionals need to make that happen.

Because I have a non-violent, well-educated son who did 8 years in prison on a drug charge. Our War on Drugs is criminal. I’m hoping your organization can do something to change the draconian laws.

My daughter is victim of the war on drugs. With one semester left to go in law school, she was arrested with less than an ounce of marijuana and two vials (first offense). She was charged as a felon, and is now unemployed, living in poverty, and severely depressed. I would like to thank you for all that you do to stop this madness, and dedicate my contribution to the crooked police of Live Oak Florida who have caused so much suffering for our family.

SSDP and the national office saved my college career! Love you guys!

I admire the efforts of students to make a difference in the world around them, especially for a cause that is all too easily criticized by the average citizen.

The progress this and other organizations like this has directly benefited me and I wish to give back.

As a former college student who happened to have a minor drug offense when I was 16, I am shocked to consider that people in similar situations may now be disqualified from getting education because of such minor problems in their past.

I believe that SSDP represents the truth as I have come to understand it about the drug war. When this truth is presented with the professionalism and earnest hope for a better future that SSDP delivers, it is undeniable. The truth with prevail, and the drug war will fall. I’m convinced of this, and fully endorse this organization. Though other groups have similar interests and messages, I support SSDP most because it focuses on the prime sufferers of the drug war - students.