

## **Morals and Faith**

Condemning nonviolent offenders to decades-long sentences and forcing them to sleep behind bars with murderers and rapists is immoral. That's why prominent religious leaders are calling for an end to mandatory minimum drug sentences. The denominations opposed to mandatory minimums include Evangelical Lutherans, Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Baptists.

## **Foreign Policy**

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration officials often unilaterally set up shop and conduct investigations in foreign countries, usually with no respect for the local rule of law. U.S. Drug War activities in Colombia directly lead to increased instability and violence in the region, empowering leftist guerillas but doing nothing to stem the flow of drug crops out of that country and into ours.

## **Federalism and States' Rights**

The federal Drug Czar's office regularly interferes with the implementation of drug policy reforms made by states and cities. For example, federal agents continue to execute armed raids of seriously ill patients in the 11 states that have legalized medical marijuana.

Showing gross disrespect for local decision making and the will of the people, the White House Drug Czar actively spends federal resources campaigning against ballot initiatives or state legislation that would scale back the War on Drugs.

## **The Drug War Makes Drugs More Dangerous**

Because of prohibition, drugs are sold on the black market, meaning that there is no quality control and users have no idea what they're putting into their bodies.

Many teens report that it is easier to obtain marijuana than alcohol. Why? Because stores selling liquor have to verify customers are of legal age, while schoolyard drug dealers never ask for ID.

## **About SSDP**

### **Mission Statement**

Students for Sensible Drug Policy is an international grassroots network of students who are concerned about the impact drug abuse has on our communities, but who also know that the War on Drugs is failing our generation and our society.

SSDP mobilizes and empowers young people to participate in the political process, pushing for sensible policies to achieve a safer and more just future, while fighting back against counterproductive Drug War policies, particularly those that directly harm students and youth.

### **Key Values**

- Shared power and authority
- Youth-controlled agenda
- Collaboration and partnership
- Constituent-specific strategies
- Learning
- Diversity and inclusion

### **Values Statement**

SSDP neither condones nor condemns drug use, rather we respect the right of individuals to make decisions about their own health and well-being. We encourage honest conversation about the realities of the drug war. We promote youth civic engagement as a critical tool in reforming drug policy. SSDP respects the diverse experiences and identities of our constituents. We develop leaders who advocate for policy changes based on justice, liberty, compassion and reason.

Founded in 1998, SSDP is comprised of thousands of members at hundreds of campuses in several countries.

# **THE WAR ON DRUGS IS A WAR ON CONSERVATIVE VALUES**

*"Take it from a businessman: The War on Drugs is just money down the drain."*  
Former Governor Gary Johnson (R-NM)

*"Legalizing drugs would simultaneously reduce the amount of crime and raise the quality of law enforcement. Can you conceive of any other measure that would accomplish so much to promote law and order?"*

Nobel Prize-winning economist Milton Friedman

*"I wouldn't be surprised if in 10 years or so you saw the conservative coalition come out for an end to drug prohibition."*  
Americans for Tax Reform's Grover Norquist



# Why are leading conservatives speaking out against the War on Drugs?

## Drug War = Bloated Government

Every year the federal government spends about \$20 billion waging the Drug War, while the states spend an additional \$30 billion. But the Drug Warriors have nothing to show taxpayers for it; drug usage rates have remained constant.

The Drug War represents the most dramatic expansion of the size and scope of the federal government in the history of the republic.

## Homeland Security and Public Safety

Just as Al Capone used illegal alcohol sales to fund his criminal empire during the first prohibition, Al Qaeda and other terrorists take advantage of today's drug prohibition to finance their appalling activities.

Because our police are so preoccupied enforcing drug laws, they often don't have the time or resources to keep murderers, rapists, and other violent criminals off the streets.

## Privacy and Personal Freedom

Federal agents and police regularly knock down Americans' doors, ransack their homes, and listen to their phone conversations—all in the name of the War on Drugs.

The underlying message of drug prohibition is that the government knows what's good for you better than you do. Citizens should be setting priorities for our government, not the other way around.

**Drug abuse is a real issue that needs to be dealt with seriously, but the War on Drugs only makes our nation's drug problems worse - for users and nonusers alike.**

With \$50 billion a year spent on enforcing ineffective drug laws, use and abuse rates go relatively unchanged. Drug prohibition, like the earlier failed experiment of alcohol prohibition, simply puts drugs in the hands of gangs and drug dealers, who care only about making a profit without concern for public safety.

The fact is, there is no drug known to man that becomes safer to the user or to society when its production and distribution are handed over to violent criminal cartels.

In the U.S., millions of people are busted with drugs every year, and taxpayers are footing the bill to house 2.2 million Americans behind bars tonight, many of them serving drug sentences. But the consequences of arrests don't end with handcuffs and jail cells. Drug convictions follow people for the rest of their lives and often make it difficult for people to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and become productive taxpaying citizens.

College students convicted of drug crimes automatically lose their financial aid, while murderers and rapists remain eligible. Many states don't even allow people with certain drug convictions to exercise their constitutional right to vote once they've served their time and are living within the law.

While ending the War on Drugs won't eliminate drug abuse, it will allow us to deal with it more effectively by bringing drug problems under the light of public scrutiny. By doing away with the black market, we'll also put drug dealing criminals out of business and reverse the economic hardship caused by ever-expanding Drug War spending.

**It's time for real solutions, not more of the same old "tough on drugs" rhetoric.**

*"We need at least to consider and examine forms of controlled legalization of drugs."*  
- Former Secretary of State George Schultz

*"I think a lot of people are coming to the realization that maybe long minimum sentences for the first-time users may not be the best way to occupy jail space and/or heal people from their disease. And I'm willing to look at that."*  
- George W. Bush

*"Eighty-five million Americans have experimented with illegal drugs. Since the object of criminal law is to detect and punish the wrongdoer, should we reason that 85 million of us should have spent time in jail?"*  
- National Review Founder William F. Buckley

*"There is a respectable body of opinion which believes that these mandatory minimums impose unduly harsh punishment for first-time offenders – particularly for 'mules' who played only a minor role in a drug distribution scheme. Be that as it may, the mandatory minimums have also led to an inordinate increase in the federal prison population and will require huge expenditures to build new prison space..."*  
- Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist

---

**The War on Drugs is an abysmal failure that seeps into countless other areas of public policy.**

Join Students for Sensible Drug Policy to help formulate next-generation drug policies based on reason, responsibility, and common sense.

**[www.SchoolsNotPrisons.com](http://www.SchoolsNotPrisons.com)**