

SSDP's Mission & Values

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.

Values Statement: Students for Sensible Drug Policy neither encourages nor condemns drug use. Rather, we seek to reduce the harms caused by drug abuse and drug policies. As young people, we strive toward a just and compassionate society where drug abuse is treated as a health issue instead of a criminal justice issue. We recognize that the very real harms of drug abuse are not adequately addressed by current policies and we advocate measures that would effectively help those who develop drug problems. Yet, we also believe that individuals must ultimately be allowed to make decisions for themselves as long as their actions do not infringe upon anyone else's freedoms or safety.

Because the War on Drugs has historically been justified as necessary to protect youth, it is our responsibility as young people stop this harmful war from being waged in our names any longer. As scholars, we seek solutions to society's drug problems through focused research, honest dialogue, and informed debate, instead of unquestioned extremism, punishment, and propaganda.

SSDP's National Campaigns

• Higher Education Act

(ssdp.org/campaigns/hea)

In 1998, Congress passed the Aid Elimination Penalty, an amendment to the Higher Education Act, which prevents students with drug convictions from receiving federal financial aid. Since then, nearly 200,000 students have lost their financial aid.

SSDP has fought for its repeal ever since, and in 2006, Congress scaled back the law, so now it applies only to students who were in school at the time of their convictions. While thousands of students will be helped by this partial victory, it's still not enough.

SSDP and the ACLU sued the Department of Education in federal court, and we're continuing to pressure Congress to repeal the law altogether.

• Campus Change (ssdp.org/campaigns/ccc)

The Campus Change Campaign is designed to help student activists change punitive prohibitionist policies on their own campuses, so they can keep their peers safe from these harmful and ineffective punishments.

Each campus climate is unique. Chapters can tackle dorm policies, the disparity between punishments for marijuana violations and underage drinking, parental notification for drug infractions, or other policies.

Running campaigns on campus helps activists hone the skills they need to take their advocacy to the next level, making change in the larger community.

• Student Drug Testing

(ssdp.org/campaigns/srp)

Despite the federal government's aggressive push for schools to implement student drug testing, the practice is counterproductive, expensive, and invasive. Students who use drugs shouldn't be locked out of extracurricular activities, which are proven to reduce drug abuse and keep kids in school.

SSDP's Grassroots Structure

While SSDP's headquarters is based in Washington, DC, we have over 100 chapters across the U.S. and Canada. Any student can start a campus chapter of SSDP. To find out if there's a chapter at your school, go to ssdp.org/chapters

Chapters embody the mission and values of SSDP (see ssdp.org/about), and work on national campaigns, but they are essentially autonomous. Chapters establish their own agendas and pay no dues.

Our national staff can help you decide which issues you want to tackle, based on the unique drug policy climate at your school, and the talents and interests of your members. We can also help book speakers and plan events, and we can give advice about obtaining funding, working with administrators, and building support for your issues.

Each year, representatives from SSDP's chapters gather for our annual conference, where we network, share strategies, socialize, and recharge. The conference is also a time when chapters can deliberate and vote on our national agenda, during the SSDP Congress.

To find out more about how to get involved in SSDP, visit ssdp.org/students

Top Ten Reasons to Join SSDP

10. You'll meet new friends at your school who agree that the War on Drugs must end.
9. You'll learn more about drug policy and how it relates to civil rights, racism, international policy, health, education, etc.
8. You'll learn how to protect your rights during a police encounter, and you'll be able to pass this knowledge along to others.
7. You'll become a trusted expert on drug policy among your peers.
6. SSDP is a resume-builder. SSDPers have gone on to high-paying, respected careers in public policy, law, and even business.
5. You'll learn how to effectively change drug policies in your school and community. And you'll probably even change a few.
4. You'll get to set the course of a growing movement against America's longest war—the War on Drugs.
3. You'll meet and socialize with SSDP members from across the U.S. and Canada at our annual International Conference.
2. You'll feel a strong sense of accomplishment and meaningfulness because you had the courage to stand up to injustice.

1. If you don't do it, who will?

SSDP's Recent Accomplishments

- Forced Congress to scale back the Higher Education Act Aid Elimination Penalty, which prevents students with drug convictions from receiving financial aid. Nearly 200,00 would-be students have been affected by the penalty. SSDP mobilized 125 student governments to voice their opposition to the unjust policy. Because of SSDP's efforts, students who were convicted before attending college are now able to receive federal financial aid.
- Defeated the Department of Education in a lawsuit seeking information about the number of students who have lost financial aid due to drug convictions in each state. When the DoE sought to make us pay an exorbitant sum to obtain the information, we sued, and *The New York Times* editorialized on our behalf.
- Mobilized student activists in SSDP chapters nationwide to reform campus, local, and state drug policies. Many SSDP chapters have been successful in enacting policy change at the local level.
- Initiated debate on the validity of student drug testing at the Office of National Drug Control Policy's student drug testing summits. By presenting data to school administrators considering drug testing, SSDP activists ensured that alternative perspectives were considered.
- Organizes an annual international conference where hundreds of students from across North America gather to learn about drug policy, network with peers, build organizing skills, and form lasting relationships.

Join Students for Sensible Drug Policy and work towards more rational and humane drug policies—on your campus, in your community, and in your country.

www.SchoolsNotPrisons.com

Not in Our Name!

As the voice of a generation raised on D.A.R.E. propaganda, Students for Sensible Drug Policy represents the millions of young people who oppose the War on Drugs. While some claim that it is waged to protect young people from drug abuse, we know that the Drug War is harmful, ineffective, expensive, and unjust. On campus and beyond, our movement works to promote policies that reduce the harms associated with drug abuse, as well as the harms associated with drug law enforcement.



**students for sensible
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