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National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign Talking Points

The government's anti-drug ads are an ineffective waste of money, and cause more drug abuse

- The government's own research funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse shows that the ads are not only ineffective, but may actually lead to *increased* pro-drug attitudes in some teens.
- A 2006 Texas State University study found that the ads might not only influence teens to have more positive attitudes toward marijuana, but also might directly increase teen marijuana use.
- The ads backfire because they're offensive to young people. Not surprisingly, teens react negatively to the ads' one-way messages filled with misinformation and propaganda. Young people want to know the truth about the effects of drugs and their real risks. But when we see ads that obviously exaggerate and stretch reality for political purposes, we are offended and turned off to anything credible the government may have to say.
- The ads are an incredibly expensive waste of taxpayer's money. Nearly \$1.5 billion has been spent on the campaign since it was created in 1998.
- The ad campaign has been criticized by the White House Office of Management and Budget, the Republican Study Committee, Taxpayers for Common Sense, Citizens Against Government Waste, the Government Accountability Office, the National Taxpayers Union, and several prominent studies funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.
- Congress has repeatedly warned the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to produce results with the campaign or lose funding, but the ads will still be funded at \$100 million next year under the spending bill that passed the House this year.
- In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the campaign spent \$4 million to run two controversial 30-second ads linking drug use to terrorism during the 2002 Super Bowl, angering even longtime allies like the Partnership for a Drug-Free America.
- In 2005, the Government Accountability Office found that ONDCP illegally used campaign funds to produce and distribute "covert propaganda" in the form of fake TV news stories featuring actors posing as reporters, which aired on nearly 300 television stations and reached 22 million households nationwide.
- The campaign is inexplicably obsessed with marijuana. None of the campaign's recent ads have even mentioned other dangerous drugs like cocaine, heroin, or alcohol.
- ONDCP has been repeatedly accused of using their ads to illegally advocate against citizen ballot initiatives and state legislation dealing with drug policy