

EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT LEGALIZATION

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R-CA) – May 2009:

“I think it's time for a debate. And I think we ought to study very carefully what other countries are doing that have legalized marijuana and other drugs, what effect it had on those countries, and are they happy with that decision...[In California] it could very well go on an initiative and ask voters directly. If voters make that decision, that's fine.”

President Vicente Fox (Mexico, 2000-2006) – February 2010:

“We need to end the war. It's time to debate legalizing drugs. Then maybe we can separate violence from what is a health problem...When the violence reached its peak in Chicago...with alcohol prohibition, the only answer and solution came by [re-legalizing] the consumption of alcohol.”

Sen. Jim Webb (D-VA) – April 2009:

“What we need to do is to put all of the issues on the table...If you go back to 1980 as a starting point, I think we had 40,000 people in prison on drug charges...Today, we have about 500,000...At the same time, we've got a situation with Mexican drug cartels conducting violence along the border, operating in more than 230 American cities and we aren't getting our arms around that in a proper way...We need a presidential commission to look at these things and to report to the Congress about the best way to go forward, but nothing should be off the table.”

George Will, syndicated columnist – October 2009:

"80 percent of the revenue of the Mexican cartels is marijuana. If you really want to go after the Mexican cartels...you'd legalize marijuana."

The Economist magazine – May 2009:

“Indeed, far from reducing crime, prohibition has fostered gangsterism on a scale that the world has never seen before...Legalisation would not only drive away the gangsters; it would transform drugs from a law-and-order problem into a public-health problem, which is how they ought to be treated.”

Arturo Sarukhan, Mexican Ambassador to the United States – April 2009:

"[T]hose who would suggest that some of these [legalization] measures be looked at understand the dynamics of the drug trade...This is a debate that needs to be taken seriously, that we have to engage in on both sides of the border: both in producing, in trafficking, and in consumption countries."

Rep. Charlie Rangel (D-NY) – May 2009:

“There’s no question that with the limited resources we have and the heavy strain that we put on law enforcement that we ought to decriminalize it.”

Former Presidents Fernando Henrique Cardoso (Brazil), Cesar Gaviria (Colombia) and Ernesto Zedillo (Mexico) – February 2009:

“The war on drugs has failed...Prohibitionist policies based on eradication, interdiction and criminalization of consumption simply haven't worked. Violence and the organized crime associated with the narcotics trade remain critical problems in our countries.”

Pat Buchanan, MSNBC commentator & syndicated columnist – March 2009:

“How does one win a drug war when millions of Americans who use recreational drugs are financing the cartels bribing, murdering and beheading to win the war and keep self-indulgent Americans supplied with drugs? There are two sure ways to end this war swiftly: Milton's way and Mao's way. Mao Zedong's communists killed users and suppliers alike, as social parasites. Milton Friedman's way is to decriminalize drugs and call off the war. Americans are never going to adopt the Maoist solution. For the users of drugs are all too often classmates, colleagues, friends, even family. Indeed, our last three presidents did not deny using drugs.”

Jack Cafferty, CNN commentator – March 2009:

“The cartels would be out of business. Instantly. Goodbye crime and violence. If drugs were legalized, we could empty out a lot of our prison cells. People will use this stuff whether it's legal or not...It's time.

Cynthia Tucker, columnist, Atlanta Journal-Constitution – October 2009:

“The violence associated with the drug trade is fueled by the illegality of the product, just as it was during Prohibition. Al Capone wreaked havoc in Chicago, all the while making millions (way back then) from the sale of illegal alcohol. When the 18th Amendment was repealed, the violence dropped off precipitously. If customers can buy their intoxicant legally, gangsters have little reason to get in the business.”

Kathleen Parker, syndicated columnist – October 2009:

“Distilled to the basics, the drug war has empowered criminals while criminalizing otherwise law-abiding citizens and wasted billions that could have been better spent on education and rehabilitation. By ever-greater numbers, Americans support decriminalizing at least marijuana, which millions admit to having used, including a couple of presidents and a Supreme Court justice.”

El Paso City Council – January 2009:

“[We] support an honest open national debate on ending the prohibition on narcotics.”
(Unanimously passed resolution ultimately vetoed by mayor.)

ACTUALLY...NOT EVERYONE WANTS TO DISCUSS LEGALIZATION

U.S. Drug Czar Gil Kerlikowske, answering LEAP staffer Tom Angell – June 2009:

“As regards to legalization, it's not in the president's vocabulary and it's not in mine.”
See "LEAP Stumps the Drug Czar" video at YouTube.com/CopsSayLegalizeDrugs