

## THE “WAR ON DRUGS” AT A GLANCE

- There is a drug arrest every 19 seconds in the U.S. Of the more than 1.6 million drug arrests in 2009, 82 percent were for possession alone.<sup>i</sup>
- The U.S. government estimates that more than 118 million Americans above the age of 12 (47 percent of the population) admit to using illegal drugs.<sup>ii</sup>
- One out of every 100 American adults is behind bars in jail or prison,<sup>iii</sup> and the U.S. houses nearly 25 percent of the world’s prisoners<sup>iv</sup> despite having less than five percent of the world’s total population.<sup>v</sup>
- In four years, more than 35,000 people have been killed in violence related to Mexico’s war against the cartels that control the illegal drug market.<sup>vi</sup>
- The Department of Justice says that the illegal drug market in the U.S. is dominated by 900,000 criminally active gang members affiliated with 20,000 street gangs in more than 2,500 cities,<sup>vii</sup> and that Mexican drug cartels now directly control illegal drug markets in at least 230 American cities.<sup>viii</sup>
- Al Qa’ida and nearly half of all U.S. State Department-listed Foreign Terrorist Organizations have ties to the illegal drug trade.<sup>ix</sup> For example, the Taliban and Afghan warlords collect nearly half a billion dollars a year from illicit drug farming, production and trafficking,<sup>x</sup> while the FARC in Colombia finances its activities with \$300 million a year in illegal drug sales.<sup>xi</sup>
- According to the federal government, 23.5 million Americans are in need of substance abuse treatment, but only one in 10 receive it.<sup>xii</sup>
- 48 percent of U.S. high school students have used illegal drugs by graduation.<sup>xiii</sup>
- Teens say obtaining illegal marijuana is easier than buying legal, controlled and age-regulated beer.<sup>xiv</sup>
- National drug control spending on harsh enforcement strategies grew by 69.7 percent over the past nine years, while spending on treatment and prevention only grew by 13.9 percent. While President Obama often talks about drug abuse as a health – and not just a crime – issue, his administration reports that federal resources devoted to supply-reduction efforts (arrests, punishment and eradication) are now nearly double those for demand-reduction programs (such as treatment and prevention).<sup>xv</sup>
- Conservative estimates say that legalizing and regulating drugs could boost the U.S. economy by \$88 billion a year in law enforcement savings and new tax revenue.<sup>xvi</sup>
- Three out of four American voters say the “war on drugs” is a failure.<sup>xvii</sup>

- In a survey by the National Association of Chiefs of Police, 82 percent of police chiefs and sheriffs said that the “war on drugs” has not been successful in reducing drug use.<sup>xviii</sup>
- According to a Gallup poll, 46 percent of Americans now favor legalizing marijuana, the largest amount of support in the firm’s over 40 years of asking the question.<sup>xix</sup> Other polls show that a majority of Americans (52 percent) now support legalizing and taxing marijuana.<sup>xx</sup> In 2010, over 4.6 million Californians (46.5% of the midterm electorate) voted for a statewide marijuana legalization ballot initiative.<sup>xxi</sup>
- African Americans, 13 percent of the U.S. population,<sup>xxii</sup> proportionately account for 13 percent of the nation’s drug users,<sup>xxiii</sup> but are 34 percent of those arrested for drug offenses<sup>xxiv</sup> and 45 percent of those held in state prisons for drug offenses.<sup>xxv</sup>
- On average, it costs \$25,251 to incarcerate a federal prisoner for one year.<sup>xxvi</sup>
- There are at least 346,605 people serving sentences in state and federal prisons for drug possession or sales in the U.S. (including more than half the entire federal inmate population).<sup>xxvii</sup>
- There were also 767,620 inmates held in local jails in the U.S. in 2009,<sup>xxviii</sup> and in 2002 (the most recent year offense data was collected), possessing or selling drugs was the most serious crime committed by a quarter of jail inmates.<sup>xxix</sup> (An unknown number of additional persons are incarcerated for crimes that occur due to the currently illegal and unregulated nature of drug markets, such as property crimes used to pay for illegal drugs or violent disputes for control of the market).
- In 2009, there were an additional 582,759 adults on probation and 261,666 adults on parole for drug law violations in the U.S.<sup>xxx</sup>
- Every day, more than 50 people die of unintentional drug overdoses in the U.S.<sup>xxxi</sup>
- While Mexican drug cartels traffic heavily in cocaine and methamphetamine, law enforcement officials estimate that 65 to 70 percent of their profits come from illegal marijuana sales, although it is inherently difficult to study illegal markets.<sup>xxxii</sup>
- In the U.S.’s overburdened criminal justice system, nearly four of ten murders, six of ten rapes and nine of ten burglaries go unsolved.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. (September 2010). *Crime in the United States, 2009*. Table 29. <http://www2.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2009/arrests/index.html>

<sup>ii</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (September 2010). *Results from the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*. Tables G.1 & G.2. <http://oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k9NSDUH/2k9ResultsApps.htm#AppG>

<sup>iii</sup> Pew Center on the States. (February 2008). *One in 100: Behind Bars In America 2008*. p. 7. <http://stage.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/One%20in%20100.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> University of London. King's College. International Centre for Prison Studies. (January 2009). *World Prison Population List (8<sup>th</sup> edition)*. p. 1. [http://www.kcl.ac.uk/depsta/law/research/icps/downloads/wppl-8th\\_41.pdf](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/depsta/law/research/icps/downloads/wppl-8th_41.pdf)

<sup>v</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce. Census Bureau. (August 2010). *U.S. & World Population Clocks*. <http://www.census.gov/main/www/popclock.html>

<sup>vi</sup> Los Angeles Times. (May 2011). *Mexico Under Siege: The Drug War At Our Doorstep*. <http://projects.latimes.com/mexico-drug-war/>

<sup>vii</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. National Drug Intelligence Center. (February 2010). *National Drug Threat Assessment 2010*. p. 57, Map A3. <http://www.justice.gov/ndic/pubs38/38661/38661p.pdf>

<sup>viii</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. National Drug Intelligence Center. (December 2008). *National Drug Threat Assessment 2009*. pp. 58-59, Map A5. <http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs31/31379/dtos.htm#Top>

<sup>ix</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. Drug Enforcement Administration. (December 2009). *Dateline DEA: DEA's Biweekly E-mail Informant*.

<sup>x</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (November 2008). *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2008*. p. 2. [http://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan\\_Opium\\_Survey\\_2008.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan_Opium_Survey_2008.pdf)

<sup>xi</sup> U.S. Department of State. Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. (March 2002). *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*. <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2001/rpt/8475.htm>

<sup>xii</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (September 2010). *Results from the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*. p. 84. <http://oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k9NSDUH/2k9Results.htm#7.3.1>

<sup>xiii</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Institutes of Health. National Institute on Drug Abuse. (December 2010). *Monitoring the Future: National Results on Adolescent Drug Use*. <http://monitoringthefuture.org/data/10data/pr10t1.pdf>

<sup>xiv</sup> National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. (August 2009). *National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse XIV: Teens and Parents*. p. 13, Figure 4.A. <http://www.casacolumbia.org/absolutenm/articlefiles/380-2009%20Teen%20Survey%20Report.pdf>

<sup>xv</sup> U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy. (February 2010). *National Drug Control Strategy: FY 2011 Budget Summary*. p. 17, Table 3. <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/policy/11budget/fy11budget.pdf>

<sup>xvi</sup> Miron, Jeffrey. (September 2010). The Budgetary Impact of Ending Drug Prohibition. [http://www.cato.org/pub\\_display.php?pub\\_id=12169](http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=12169)

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- <sup>xvii</sup> Zogby International. (October 2008). *Zogby/Inter-American Dialogue Survey: Public Views Clash with U.S. Policy on Cuba, Immigration, and Drugs*. <http://www.zogby.com/news/ReadNews.cfm?ID=1568>
- <sup>xviii</sup> National Association of Chiefs of Police. (2005). *18th Annual National Survey Results of Police Chiefs & Sheriffs*. <http://www.aphf.org/surveyresults.pdf>
- <sup>xix</sup> Gallup. (October 2010). <http://www.gallup.com/poll/144086/new-high-americans-support-legalizing-marijuana.aspx>
- <sup>xx</sup> Zogby International. (April 2009). <http://www.askleap.net/zogby-marijuana.pdf>
- <sup>xxi</sup> California Secretary of State. (November 2010). <http://vote.sos.ca.gov/returns/ballot-measures/>
- <sup>xxii</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce. Census Bureau. (March 2004). *Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement*. <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/race/black/pp1-186/tab1ic.html>
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Calculation by LEAP based on immediately prior citation and: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (September 2010). *Results from the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*. Tables G.5 & G.11 <http://oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k9NSDUH/2k9ResultsApps.htm#AppG>
- <sup>xxiv</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. Federal Bureau of Investigation. (September 2010). *Crime in the United States, 2009*. Table 43. [http://www2.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2009/data/table\\_43.html](http://www2.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2009/data/table_43.html)
- <sup>xxv</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. Bureau of Justice Statistics. (December 2010). *Prisoners in 2009*. p. 30, Table 16c. <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/p09.pdf>
- <sup>xxvi</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. Bureau of Prisons. (February 2011). *Annual Determination of Average Cost of Incarceration*. <http://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2011/02/03/2011-2363/annual-determination-of-average-cost-of-incarceration>
- <sup>xxvii</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. Bureau of Justice Statistics. (December 2010). *Prisoners in 2009*. p. 30, Table 16c; p. 33, Table 18. <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/p09.pdf>
- <sup>xxviii</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. Bureau of Justice Statistics. (June 2010). *Jail Inmates at Midyear 2009*. p. 4, Table 1. <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/jim09st.pdf>
- <sup>xxix</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. Bureau of Justice Statistics. (July 2004). *Profile of Jail Inmates, 2002*. p. 3, Table 3. <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/pji02.pdf>
- <sup>xxx</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. Bureau of Justice Statistics. (December 2010). *Probation and Parole in the United States, 2009*. p. 31, Table 10; p. 41, Table 20. <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/ppus09.pdf>
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- <sup>xxxii</sup> U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee on Crime and Drugs. (March 2009). Hearing, "Law Enforcement Responses to Mexican Drug Cartels." <http://judiciary.senate.gov/hearings/hearing.cfm?id=3718>
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. (September 2010). *Crime in the United States, 2009*. Table 25. <http://www2.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2009/offenses/clearances/index.html>