
The War on Drugs has failed;
We must make peace,
Heal our wounds,
And change our laws.

**DRUGS
&
VIOLENCE**

**END THE VIOLENCE...
END PROHIBITION**

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RECONSIDER:
FORUM ON DRUG POLICY

DRUGS & VIOLENCE

Americans, like people all over the world, want to be safe. We want to be safe on our streets and in our homes. We want our children to be safe in their schools. We have been taught that much of the violence that plagues our communities is caused by drugs and, in order to be safe, we must rid our communities of drugs and drug dealers. This is only partly true.

We know the destruction that drugs can cause in some people's lives. We've all seen or heard about kids dropping out of school, getting mixed up with a bad crowd, and engaging in self-destructive behavior while using drugs. But does drug use cause violence? I think you'll be surprised at the answer.

The drug most associated with violence is alcohol, and yet even alcohol does not CAUSE violence. It does lower inhibitions and free violent people to behave violently. Think of a kind, gentle person you know. If this person got drunk, do you think he or she would suddenly beat you? Probably not. This is the same with illegal drugs as well — they don't create violence in gentle people, but when violent people use alcohol or other drugs, they will sometimes act violently.

So what CAUSES the violence we associate with drugs? The next time you hear about a "drug-related crime" ask yourself if it really shouldn't be called a "drug-**business** related crime." Drug dealers commit violent acts to protect their turf from other drug dealers selling to their customers. Drug dealers commit violence to collect money owed them. Drug users rob to get money to buy drugs and often hurt others in the process. This is all true. But these problems are the logical results of doing business in the black market that has been created as a result of drug prohibition—not with drug use itself.

In the 1920's we saw drive-by shootings, people poisoned by bootleg alcohol, wide-spread disrespect for the law, and criminals getting rich from the money they made because alcohol was prohibited. After a few years, Americans said "Yes alcohol does cause problems for some who use it, but the crime wave we've started by trying prohibition is ruining our country!" Once we repealed alcohol prohibition, dealers could now take their disputes to court, the FDA regulated the purity of alcohol, and the crime surrounding illegal alcohol all but disappeared overnight.

We need to strictly regulate the sale of drugs in our communities. We need to put drug dealers out of business by taking the profit out of illegal drug sales. We need to save our children from the lure of big profits to be made from the selling of illegal drugs. If we want our kids to grow up safer, and not use cocaine or heroin, we need to make the streets safe once again and take back the community from the drug dealers.

In 1973 the Federal Government spent about \$420 million on drug enforcement and drug use was a much smaller problem than it is today. Last year it spent about \$19 BILLION and drugs are more available, more potent, and cheaper. There are more prisons than ever and they're bursting at the seams. People are dying daily in our streets as a result of drug-business related violence. Obviously, what we've been doing is causing more harm than good. We need to take back control of our streets. We need to regulate the sale of the currently illegal drugs.

We need to RECONSIDER our drug policy ..**NOW!**
