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"If government can tell us what we can put into our own bodies, what can it not tell us?"

Damon W. Root | October 26, 2010

Writing as part of an *Encyclopedia Britannica* symposium on marijuana and California's Proposition 19, the Cato Institute's David Boaz makes the case for "drug legalization and the right to control your body":

People have rights that governments may not violate. Thomas Jefferson defined them as the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. When I'm asked what libertarianism is, I often say that it is the idea that adult individuals have the right and the responsibility to make the important decisions about their own lives. More categorically, I would say that people have the right to live their lives in any way they choose so long as they don't violate the equal rights of others. What right could be more basic, more inherent in human nature, than the right to choose what substances to put in one's own body? Whether we're talking about alcohol, tobacco, herbal cures, saturated fat, or marijuana, this is a decision that should be made by the individual, not the government. If government can tell us what we can put into our own bodies, what can it not tell us? What limits on government action are there?

Read the whole thing [here](#). Read *Reason's* Prop 19 coverage [here](#). Reason.tv asks if Californians should legalize marijuana below:

Prop 19: Should Californians legalize marijuana?



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