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### October 25, 2010

#### It's never 4:20 in the lefty think tanks?

By Thoreau

Over the weekend, we discussed how the rank-and-file supporters of legalization do mostly lean left (although some of my more nanny-style lefty friends and “I don’t smoke it so taxing it won’t affect me!” righty friends run counter to both sides of that stereotype) Democratic politicians are mostly against legalization (at least in public) for obvious reasons of kulturkampf. (And probably also the fact that politicians of any stripe like things that involve power.) I just realized this morning that when I read about legalization, any time I see mention of a pro-legalization think-tanker it’s always, always, ALWAYS a Cato person. Admittedly, I don’t read every single piece of literature on legalization or every single article on Prop. 19, but I do read non-libertarian stuff on legalization, and even the lefty stuff on legalization seems to quote Cato. Even Greenwald, when talking about Portugal’s experiment, gave a talk at Cato.

Now, Cato is obviously a well-known institution that has spent a lot of time writing about legalization, so there’s one reason for them to get lots of attention on this. And I do realize that right-leaning and libertarian-leaning think tanks outnumber lefty think tanks (less so than in the past, admittedly), so statistically any time you see a think tank quoted the odds are that it’s not a lefty think tank. Finally, I admit that I have not personally checked every position paper ever put out by a lefty think tank, so maybe there’s a whole bunch of legalization sentiment that I’m just missing out on. But, whatever the reason, and however much individuals in lefty think tanks might have pro-legalization views, it’s Cato that gets all the attention.

Am I just missing out on stuff? Or is it the case that just as Democratic politicians who want to be seen as “Serious” avoid legalization talk (never mind that they and their Republican counterparts probably all inhaled in college) the lefty think tankers also avoid legalization talk to be seen as “Serious”? Or is it an amalgam of these: There are indeed lefty position papers in favor of legalization, but the media quotes Cato because they are seen as more respectable on legalization than those dirty hippies in the lefty think tanks?

Posted by Thoreau @ [10:47 am](#), Filed under: [Main](#)

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#### 13 Responses to “It’s never 4:20 in the lefty think tanks?”

1. *Comment by bill* —  
*October 25, 2010 @ [12:05 pm](#)*

Yes.

2. *Comment by [Ken Houghton](#)* —  
*October 25, 2010 @ [12:06 pm](#)*

There are no real “lefty” think tanks. Brookings? Don’t make us laugh. CAP? That these are the people who gave Matty Y a star position speaks for itself. CBPP? The “B” for “Budget” shows that they concentrate on the gossip centers of DC. (Maybe their next move is to work on a State level. Maybe my next marriage will be to Olivia Wilde. Would there even be a spread bet to make there?)

There is the basic question: the CATO argument is that the “social cost” of enforcement is greater than the social cost of drug use. The lefty organizations have spent the last thirty-plus years trying to argue that there are “social benefits” (roads, Admin costs, poverty reduction, clean air and water, etc.). That they are obligated to make those arguments is