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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2010

Former Dope-Smoking Governor Does Good, Lessens Pot Penalties

LAW ENFORCEMENT & CRIME [David Downs](#) – Fri, Oct 1, 2010 at 10:42 AM

5 Governor **Arnold Schwarzenegger** signed a bill by Congressman **Mark Leno** today that further decriminalizes personal possession of marijuana, downgrading it from a misdemeanor, like tagging, to an infraction, like a traffic ticket. Some 60,000 Californians are arrested yearly for misdemeanor pot possession, giving them a criminal record and forcing them to appear in court and pay a fine. Enforcing the state's pot laws, which has done nothing to tamp down on monthly usage by four million Californians, costs the state about **\$1 billion a year**, the **Cato Institute** has found.

“Sacramento finished what it started 35 years ago — lowering the penalties for personal marijuana possession to those of a traffic ticket,” stated **Stephen Gutwillig**, California director of the **Drug Policy Alliance**. “The voters, however, are already poised to take the next step, adopting **Prop. 19** to eliminate all penalties for personal possession and begin to bring this state’s unregulated \$14 billion underground marijuana market under the rule of law once and for all.”

Blacks and Latinos use the ancient herbal remedy less than whites, but account for the majority of such arrests because cops tend to focus on policing poor neighborhoods more heavily than rich ones. A pot arrest can lead to loss of federal financial aid, and opportunities for employment. Studies show **unemployment and lack of an education** are the two biggest factors determining whether someone will go on to use harder drugs like coke, meth, and heroin and suffer a lifetime of addiction.

Prop 19, the ballot initiative to lift all penalties for over-21 possession of up to an ounce of marijuana in public, goes before voters-by-mail starting October 4. It's currently winning by a significant but small margin in two polls.

Register to vote here.

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Daily Roundup: Stoners Against Legalization Team Up With Ex-Crackhead Priest

Booze Lobby Funding the No on 19 Campaign

Former Dope-Smoking Governor Does Good, Lessens Pot Penalties

No Joke: Secret Government Agents Circling Pot Farms in Oakland, Berkeley



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