

The Daily Gamecock

Ending War on Drugs would benefit US economy

By [John Cuenin](#) November 13, 2011

Taxing drugs results in increased revenue

The federal government ordered medicinal marijuana dispensaries to close starting Nov. 12 or be punished by federal prosecutors. This is part of a battle that the US government has been fighting for 40 years and has only impacted the "problem" in a minimal way.

The first federal anti-drug law was instated in 1914 to combat opium consumption. The first anti-cannabis law was instated in 1937; some claim that it was by the lobbying efforts of DuPont Inc., a textile company that wished to combat the competition from hemp products. And the United States' "War on Drugs" was started in 1971 by the Richard Nixon administration and has cost billions of dollars and numerous lives since.

In 2007, 1,841,182 Americans were arrested on drug-related charges, according to a Cato Institute report. The report said in 2008, \$26.11 billion was spent on drug-related prosecution in our legal system, which includes police work, judicial prosecutions and correctional costs.

The United States must reform its drug laws. Three out of four Americans feel the War on Drugs is failing. I, much like other college students, feel that most drugs are just like alcohol: If you want to use them to have a good time, then have at it. The government needs to realize that drugs could make hundreds of billions of dollars from tax revenue, including sin taxes, sales taxes and income taxes.

Legalization in the United States would also make Central and South America much safer regions, and the United States should be actively working toward a peaceful Western Hemisphere and a peaceful world. USC professor Jim Stiver will host a lively discussion Tuesday at 7 p.m. in Gambrell Hall room 005 further exploring the discussion of America's drug addiction and if the country should kick its habit.