

Conservative former congressman calls for drug legalization

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He's best known for taking a hard line against immigration during his tenure in Congress and in the course of his abortive campaign for the Republican presidential nomination, but now former Representative Tom Tancredo, of Colorado, has acquired another distinction: He's joined the growing ranks of former political figures who, upon leaving office, admit that drug prohibition is a failed and disastrous policy and who call for consideration of legalization as a solution.

With a lifetime rating of [97.20 out of 100](#) from the American Conservative Union, Tancredo's call for discussion of legalization might be described as a Nixon-goes-to-China moment. During a May 20, 2009, speech at the [Lincoln Club of Colorado](#) specifically addressing drug policy, the fiery right-winger pointed to the billions of dollars spent prosecuting and jailing drug users and dealers to [no good effect](#):

"I am convinced that what we are doing is not working. It is now easier for a kid to get drugs at most schools in America than it is booze."



Former Rep. Tom Tancredo has called for drug legalization to be considered. (Official photo)

Tancredo is in good company. Just last week, former Mexican President Vicente Fox, another conservative, [told CNN](#), "I believe it's time to open the debate over legalizing drugs."

Of course, both these men are *former* officeholders. Only rarely does a politician who still possesses the power to influence policy call for an end to drug prohibition and its legacy of civil liberties violations, corruption and death.

As Doug Bandow of the Cato Institute [comments](#), "It's time for politicians like Tancredo to start telling the truth while they are still in office."

Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard, a drug warrior second to none, has [grudgingly called for discussion of marijuana legalization](#) -- while saying he opposes the idea himself.

Rep. Ron Paul, of Texas, is one of the few sitting politicians to [explicitly endorse legalization](#).