

Independent Political Report

C Michael Pickens: A Tiny Shred of Sanity in California's Insane War on Drugs

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Government has no business telling citizens what they can and cannot put into their own bodies. Part of liberty is being able to decide what to consume and what to leave alone. Mentally competent adults should have authority over their own bodies and to give government the ability to make those decisions for the People is wrong and is a massive intrusion on privacy and civil liberties. Mark Leno (D-San Francisco) has introduced SB 1506, a bill that would reduce the penalty for the possession of cocaine, heroin, and marijuana, among others, to be no more than one year in county jail. This bill is a step in the right direction toward giving more liberty and freedom of choice to individuals who may or may not wish to utilize these substances. Although it is a step in the right direction, it does not nearly go far enough.

While many choose not to engage in these substances, who is the government to command people about their own personal choices and free will? What one does to one's own body is of no concern to the government or anyone else except the individual; that is ultimately what liberty is about.

Most Libertarians believe that the drug policy that Portugal initiated in July 2001 is a great model to look at and to take inspiration from in order to improve our own policy. In an interview with Nick Gillespie about his Cato Institute article, "Drug Criminalization in Portugal: Lessons for Creating Fair and Successful Drug Policies" (video below), author Glenn Greenwald said, "Decriminalization [in Portugal] was the answer to how can we best limit drug usage and drug addiction and it was a policy to do that." We in

California have a long way to go, but SB 1506 is one step towards getting Big Government off our backs. While substance abuse can be a legitimate cause for concern, the real concern is the role of government and how far it will go to control and manipulate our lives. Responsible adult citizens are the sovereign decision-makers of their own lives and if substance abuse is a problem, citizen-run anti-dependence and abuse programs are always available.

Reason TV: Drug decriminalization in Portugal

The issue at stake here is not just about self-sovereignty, but also personal liberty and privacy rights. Libertarians nationwide affirm in the 2008 national platform that “We support the protections provided by the Fourth Amendment to be secure in our persons, homes, and property. Only actions that infringe on the rights of others can properly be termed crimes. We favor the the repeal of all laws creating “crimes” without victims, such as the use of drugs for medicinal or recreational purposes.” The use of substances like marijuana for personal use by responsible adults is not a danger to society. The use of such substances only affects the user and does not pose a threat to anyone else. People who choose to engage in such activities are not criminals, they are simply exercising personal liberty. It’s about time that we as a society got serious about this issue and made a mature, positive change in our current drug policy.

Who benefits from the Drug War? According to Change.org News, “The feds are happy because they are making the busts — and that makes their paymasters in Washington happy and their jobs secure. The drug cartels are happy because the prices continue to spike and for every mule that gets caught, countless others are bound to get through to feed the market on the other side. And the prison industry is only too happy to make room for more dealers, killers and non-violent offenders alike linked to that drug market.” The only reason why decriminalization has not yet occurred in the United States is because there is too much money involved in the federal government, the police and the prison industries. This system is pure lunacy; otherwise law-abiding citizens are being locked up for just a small amount of a Big Government “Controlled Substance”. When will it end? How much control is too much until the People snap? SB 1506 is

progress towards creating the change that is long overdue and necessary for the true liberty of a free society. I only wish it went further...

Judge Jim Gray on the groups that benefit from drug prohibition

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