

Lewiston Morning Tribune (Idaho)

End war on drugs

Terence L. Day
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Conservative columnist George Will's arguments against decriminalizing drugs (April 8) conflicts with the libertarian **Cato Institute's** policy analysis on America's prohibition of alcohol.

Will claims Prohibition worked as a public health measure, producing dramatic declines in alcohol-related illness. That assertion he supports with cherry-picked data such as a decline in cirrhosis of the liver.

As the Cato report, which you may read at www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/alcohol-prohibition-was-failure, notes, public health issues are much broader than cirrhosis of the liver and alcohol consumption quickly rebounded from an initial decline.

"Although consumption of alcohol fell at the beginning of Prohibition, it subsequently increased," the report says, and "Alcohol became more dangerous to consume." More dangerous because bootlegged liquor was much stronger than legal liquor had been and because much of it was contaminated with dangerous chemicals.

The social and moral consequences of Prohibition far outweighed the benefits, yet we insist on making the same mistake in our "war on drugs."

Recreational drugs should be decriminalized, or legalized, for the same reasons it was necessary to repeal prohibition of alcohol.

I am not a libertarian. My father died of delirium tremens when I was 10 years old and I have never drunk alcohol or used recreational drugs. I am fully cognizant of the problems associated with both, and also am painfully aware of the problems associated with Prohibition.

We had the good sense to repeal Prohibition and it's far past time to end our war on recreational drugs.

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Pullman