

Proposition 19 Loses To Ignorance

Californians once again let ignorance and stupidity sway the vote against their best interests.

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The California Police Chiefs and Narcotics Officers associations have more in common with violent Mexican drug cartels and the California Beer & Beverage Distributors than you might think. They all opposed the passage of Proposition 19, which was defeated by 54 percent of voters.

For anyone living in a prescription drug haze -- literally half of America -- Prop 19 would have legalized the use and cultivation of marijuana for adults over 21. Additionally, it would have allowed local governments to sell and tax it in the same way as alcohol.

Proposition 19's failure is not surprising. Californians consistently prove themselves to be either ignorant or stupid. Perhaps this state-of-being is what causes people, in utter unsmiling seriousness, to believe "voting for the lesser of two evils" is a vote well cast.

After all, this is the land of voter-approved Prop 8 and a population educated in the lowest-ranked, civics-course-free schools in the country. It's a voting public easily fooled by propaganda. Lazy-eyed "environmentally conscious" citizens, who voted 62 percent against Prop 23 because it was funded by Texas Oil, passed Prop 26, also funded by big oil.

Supporters of Prop 19 include retired police chiefs, judges, dozens of lawyers, a former U.S. Surgeon General, representatives in congress, and all major third parties.

According to the official voter information guide, "there is \$14 billion in marijuana sales every year in California, but our debt ridden state gets none of it." Drug cartels, business-savvy teenagers, and gangs receive most of the profits currently. The high school student selling it doesn't check for ID, nor does the drug dealer they bought it from.

"We've tried the prohibitionists' way, for over 40 years, and the only result has been more and more drugs flowing into our country and more and more profits going into the pockets of organized criminals," said Stephen Downing, former Los Angeles Deputy Chief of Police. "We have to move away from prohibition and toward controlling and regulating the market for marijuana, just as when we ended alcohol prohibition to put Al Capone's smuggling buddies out of business."

The Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, estimated \$1.6 billion in annual profits from the commercial

sale of marijuana in cash-strapped California.

Voters must have forgotten that \$17 billion has been cut from California public education in the past two years. Commercial cultivation of pot would have created an estimated 100,000 jobs and Prop 19 could have generated billions from the currently illegal hemp industry.

It could have been a victory of rationality and civil liberty ending a 100-year-campaign, rooted in racism, against marijuana users. Alice Huffman, president of the California NAACP, called it a civil rights issue. She said despite a lower rate of usage among blacks, "blacks are arrested for marijuana possession at higher rates than whites, typically at double, triple, or even quadruple the rate."

Marijuana has been proven to be one of the safest substances on earth by modern science and traditional usage. Prohibition didn't work on alcohol and it isn't working on marijuana either. Above all, this is a civil rights issue involving control of one's body and mind. Let's hope Californians can pull their act together in 2012 when more marijuana legalization initiatives are expected to appear.

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