

Only 33 days until Prop 19! [Contribute now.](#)

## A loss of reason at Reason

David Harsanyi has a particularly ignorant column at Reason about legalization, which is a real surprise. [Waiting for the Man](#)  
[The long road to marijuana legalization](#)

This is someone who is in *favor of* legalization. He seems to be saying that nothing is going to come of legalization because the politicians aren't ready to act, and we don't have any arguments that will sway them (or sway the people enough to make them act).

His conclusion is:

The minority that wants real reform? Politically speaking, our bad arguments are terrible and our good ones are worse.

Really?

Well, maybe if you look through the arguments that he cherry-picked to represent us, and ignore all the arguments that he chose to leave out, then maybe you'd get a little of that feeling, but even then, you'd have to take his sarcasm seriously (I'm halfway wondering if his OpEd was supposed to be sarcastic and he really means the opposite, because he jokes a lot in it, but I'm having trouble reading it that way).

Sure, we can claim that illicit drugs are harmless. But having partaken in youthful "experimentation," I can say with empirical certainty this is untrue. If drugs are harmless, why did I try to convert Pez dispensers into bongs or choose journalism as a career?

What a strange person.

Besides, we don't claim that all illicit drugs are harmless. We claim that drug prohibition is harmful — much more so than drugs, without the benefit of reducing any of the harm of drugs. Now that's a solid argument with traction. One he leaves out entirely.

Or we could keep pretending that pot has profound medicinal value. In Denver, a sham medical pot industry has blossomed, and coincidentally there have been mass outbreaks of Andromeda strain and cooties among 20-somethings. This makes a mockery of real sickness and threatens to turn one-time public support into deeper skepticism.

*Pretending* that pot has profound medicinal value? It does, and the fact that others want to use it as well doesn't change the medicinal value.

We could argue that legalizing drugs would provide government with a great source of revenue. (No worries; the "wealthiest among us" would pay their fair share.) But a new Cato Institute study by Harvard economist Jeffrey Miron and Katherine Waldo at New York University finds that there would be a rather unexceptional \$17.4 billion in yearly national budgetary improvement from legalizing marijuana.

*Unexceptional.* In today's economy? Let's see, with that money, you could send over two million young people to a state university for a year.

There are plenty of other solid arguments that can resonate with the people (and thereby to the politicians). Reducing corruption. Starving the black market. Reducing the collateral damage to society of being over-reliant on prisons. [Improving the relationship](#) of cops to the community. Doing a better job of helping those with drug problems.

I don't know what Harsanyi was thinking, but it sure wasn't Reasonable.



September 30th, 2010 by Pete | [Permalink](#)

### 8 comments to A loss of reason at Reason



kaptinemo

[September 30, 2010 at 9:16 am](#)

I went there. I read it. And I can only say, "WTF?"

He's all over the place, like a handful of items thrown into the spin cycle of an empty washing machine, randomly bouncing off of each other and the inside of the drum. I don't get it. And I am an unabashed fan of *Reason*. Been reading it for years.

Why was it even published like that?



BuelahMan

[September 30, 2010 at 9:24 am](#)

I have been following the clown site for a while. Reason has (or had) but one redeeming quality... their supposed alliance in this endeavor.