



Prohibitionist County Commissioner Arrested for Drug Trafficking

Nick Sibilla | February 23, 2012

El Paso, Texas County Commissioner Willie Gandara Jr. was arrested late Wednesday on [federal drug-trafficking charges](#). Few details have been released, but according to a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) spokeswoman, the investigation involves multiple agencies:

DEA, ICE, IRS with the assistance of the FBI along with our local partners are conducting an ongoing operation, and we cannot release further details at this time.

Back in September 2011, Gandara harshly criticized [drug legalization](#) in an official statement:

Legalizing drugs is the coward practice of combating cartels, it is an insult to our men and women in law enforcement, and the laziest form of parenting our children and youth about the effects of drugs.

He also attacked former El Paso City Rep. Beto O'Rourke, a Democrat running for [Congress](#). O'Rourke advocates [legalizing marijuana](#) to stop Mexican drug violence, and recently spoke at a Cato Institute conference on ending the drug war. O'Rourke summed up his anti-drug war views to the *El Paso Times* last fall, saying:

We can do a much better job of keeping marijuana out of the hands of kids and keeping marijuana proceeds out of the hands of cartels that use those proceeds to murder, kill and terrorize with impunity, corrupt public officials, recruit people and arm themselves.

But [Gandara](#) disapproves of O'Rourke:

As a parent, it is common sense for me to support Congressman (Silvestre) Reyes who is against the legalization of drugs. Unfortunately, on (sic) this upcoming primary election we will have many wolves in sheep's clothing running for office who are seeking election with an ulterior agenda to legalize drugs.

As the *Houston Chronicle* notes, this isn't the first time the Gandara family has run afoul of the [law](#):

He is the son of former Socorro Mayor Willie Gandara Sr., who was charged in 2010 in an FBI public corruption investigation. Voters last May removed the elder Gandara from office.

Hat tip to [Ethan Nadelmann](#).

Reason.tv on the [drug war](#).