



Legalization of Drugs Should Be Part of a Transhumanist Agenda

Zoltan Istvan

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I'm from San Francisco. Doing drugs—especially smoking pot—seems second nature to me. I've made a point of trying nearly all drugs, and I'm unabashedly proud of that fact. I consider Aldous Huxley's The Doors of Perception one of the most important books I read in my youth, and I've often wondered if it should be mandatory that everyone try a hallucinogenic drug at least once in their lives.

Almost all transhumanists welcome and endorse mind-altering substances. We thrive off change, experimentation, and new experiences, including wild drug trips with friends. For transhumanists, trying drugs is not just about having fun, but about self-amelioration and becoming the best, most enlightened versions of ourselves.

I'm driving a bus across the country to deliver a Transhumanist Bill of Rights to the US Capitol. One of those rights will certainly include language that advocates for citizens being able to take any drugs they want, so long as the taking of it doesn't directly hurt someone else.

Unfortunately, while California—which is home to many transhumanist-minded organizations and companies, like Google and Apple—breeds a culture of open-mindedness, many states in the South don't.

Perhaps no state demonstrates this better than Arkansas, which ironically bills itself as "The Natural State." While many states at least allow marijuana to be administered medically to terminally ill patients, Arkansas does no such thing. Pot is totally illegal.

My bus and presidential campaign drove into Little Rock, Arkansas to meet with Rick Morgan, a proponent of the cannabis legalization effort in the state.

"It's incredible to me that if a dying person wants to smoke a little weed to help with their last days, it's not allowed," Morgan told me.

Morgan runs a number of stores that sell cannabis related items, and is also the creator of Realbud Camo, which makes camouflaged shirts using marijuana plant images.

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Morgan told me when someone refuses to give marijuana to a dying person that wants it, he considers that appalling.

I agree with him. In fact, I believe it should be crime to *not* allow mild recreational drugs to people who want them.

“There are nearly three million people who suffer from epilepsy in America, and some would take marijuana if they could legally get it because it helps to control seizures,” Steve Slater, a Texas-based advocate of marijuana legalization and a retired military engineer told me. “But often epileptics can’t get access to it, such as in Arkansas. In fact, some epileptics have to move to different states that allow cannabis so they can get access to it. This moving sometimes results in breaking up families. It’s ridiculous. An end to seizures shouldn’t be determined by one’s zip code.”

America has undergone a prohibition era before from 1920 to 1933 with alcohol. Most people consider it a disaster. Not only did numerous distilleries appear selling illegal, untaxed, and unregulated drink, but alcohol prohibition grew to represent everything that was wrong with government. By the time Prohibition was lifted, many Americans thought their government was a joke. For millions of young people in the US, the feeling is the same regarding the War on Drugs.

Broadly a failure, the trillion dollar War on Drugs has done little to curb drug use, which remains common in just about every populated part of America. In fact, what the War on Drugs is best known for now is putting nonviolent offenders in jail. In 2014, media reported that every minute someone was arrested in the US for marijuana possession, totaling over 620,000 people. Costs associated with the arrests, processing, and incarceration were in the billions, and all of it taxpayer money.

“It’s a medicine,” said Morgan. “How can we be so closed-minded to arrest over a half-million Americans in a year for a medicine?”

To me, it’s obvious that recreational drugs should be immediately legalized. Furthermore, those drugs should be taxed, and the money should be put into education. Colorado is an example of this. The \$44 million dollar windfall that Colorado is enjoying this year from cannabis legalization is transforming its economy.

For me, Colorado has set the strong example that every state in America can benefit from marijuana. However, the more challenging question is whether all drugs should be legalized.

One European country, Portugal did this in 2001. A study done by the Cato Institute, the US-based libertarian think tank, showed that five years after this step, drug use among teens dropped and so did HIV infections caused by sharing needles.

Time Magazine reports:

"Judging by every metric, decriminalization in Portugal has been a resounding success," says Glenn Greenwald, an attorney, author and fluent Portuguese speaker, who conducted the research [yes, the same Greenwald who worked with Edward Snowden and broke the story of the US surveillance programs]. "It has enabled the Portuguese government to manage and control the drug problem far better than virtually every other Western country does."

Portugal, rather than spending its money on enforcing drug laws, spent those resources on rehabilitation of problem users.

It's the exact kind of idea that appeals to me, and based on Portugal's results, I'm willing to gently push for a totally free drug policy in America.

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While a free-for-all on drugs in America may seem outrageous, there are more benefits to this than are obvious. Many prisons are filled with nonviolent drug offenders. We could let them go and save billions on prison costs for social services and education. And we need not let prisoners just go totally free either, but use radical drone technology to monitor them during their sentence time in the public.

Additionally, a free drug policy would have the benefit of lessening the power of the mafia, drug lords, and gangs who make black market money off selling substances. Maybe by legalizing drugs, we'd change the underground drug system enough that even black market players might start trying to build legitimate businesses and paying taxes.

"In the end of the day, drugs are about health and money," Morgan said. "And there's a lot of money to be made off of them. And that will benefit the economy—including both small and big businesses."

Despite my enthusiasm for legalizing most or even all drugs, I wouldn't want that to occur overnight. Care must be taken to work out the change that society would experience from such an important cultural shift. However, I do see the benefit of starting the conversation immediately to begin down that legalization road. I worry by being such a restrictive country as we are now, future generations will one day look back at us in ridicule, like how we look back at Prohibition. As a nation, it's time to move beyond the typical political and philosophical stance that recreational drug use is immoral. Instead, we should see drug use and experimentation as a positive endeavor a transhumanist society embraces to better itself.