



8 Ways the Newly Elected Congress Can Reduce the Harm Caused by the War on Drugs and Save Taxpayer \$

Time for the Democrats to Think About an Exit Strategy for the War on Drugs

The Democrats have taken Congress, but will they act on drug policy reform issues?

The Higher Education Act, Aid Elimination Penalty, which denies or delays student financial aid to applicants who have been convicted of a minor drug offense, is the first law in need of repeal. Otherwise well performing students are penalized for what many in Congress and the White House did when they were young...smoked marijuana. This law is hypocritical at best.

The other laws which Congress could act on, without seeming *soft on crime* are:

- ◆ **Fix the crack vs. powder cocaine sentencing disparity which sends people convicted of 10 grams of crack or 100 grams of powder cocaine to prison for 10 years.** This inequality in the law is based on racism and has not reduced consumption of cocaine, nor deterred children from trying drugs.
- ◆ **Allow doctors to prescribe adequate pain medication for serious and terminally ill patients without fear of arrest.** What does it say about our country when people are suffering or resorting to criminality because they, or someone else, may become addicted to the medicine needed for adequate pain relief?
- ◆ **Repeal the laws that deny public assistance, including job training, to persons convicted of a felony drug offense.** People can not get their lives on track after prison, and often end up right back there, because there's no way to get a job, housing, food or respect in society.
- ◆ **Reign in the Office of National Drug Policy Control's spending!** With no accountability, this office has enacted programs that benefit big business, like student drug testing, even though the studies confirm it's a waste of taxpayer funding.
- ◆ **Decriminalize marijuana for adults.** The amount of taxpayer money wasted to arrest nearly 800,000 people each year could be better used on effective drug education in our schools. Marijuana is safer for adults than alcohol, and the taxes could fund rehabilitation for those seriously addicted persons like alcoholics and tobacco users.
- ◆ **End the coca and opium eradication programs.** These programs do nothing to reduce consumption of drugs in the US yet they cost a billion dollars a year.
- ◆ **Finally, Also, Congress needs to stop the DEA from arresting medical marijuana patients in the 11 states where it is legal.** It is unconscionable that our government is arresting sick and dying people with taxpayer funds. What kind of Christian nation do we call ourselves when we allow an out-of-control law enforcement agency to arrest people for using a medicine recommended by physicians and made legal through the referendum process and state legislatures?