

Marijuana Prohibition Not Based on Science

Written by Letter to Editor
Tuesday, 18 June 2002 18:00

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Section 11 of the Cannabis Control Act (see City Shorts, River Cities' Reader Issue 378, June 12, 2002) allows eligible Illinois patients to legally use medical marijuana, providing they obtain written approval from the Illinois State Police. Do Illinois police possess the medical qualifications necessary to supervise doctor-patient relationships?

Not only should medical marijuana be made available to cancer and AIDS patients in need, but marijuana prohibition itself should be subjected to a thorough cost-benefit analysis. Unfortunately, a review of marijuana legislation would open up a Pandora's box most politicians would just as soon avoid.

America's marijuana laws are based on culture and xenophobia, not science. The first marijuana laws were enacted in response to Mexican migration during the early 1900s, despite opposition from the American Medical Association. White Americans did not even begin to smoke marijuana until a soon-to-be-entrenched government bureaucracy began funding reefer-madness propaganda.

Dire warnings that marijuana inspires homicidal rages have been counterproductive at best. An estimated 38 percent of Americans have now smoked pot. The reefer-madness myths have long been discredited, forcing the drug-war gravy train to spend millions of tax dollars on politicized research, trying to find harm in a relatively harmless plant. Meanwhile, research that might demonstrate the medical efficacy of marijuana is consistently blocked.

The direct experience of millions of Americans contradicts the sensationalistic myths used to justify marijuana prohibition. Illegal drug use is the only public-health issue wherein key stakeholders are not only ignored but actively persecuted and incarcerated. In terms of medical marijuana, those stakeholders happen to be cancer and AIDS patients.

Additional background information:
(<http://www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/History/HISTORY.HTM>) and Pew Research poll findings
(<http://www.people-press.org/reports/print.php3?PageID=122>).

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Robert Sharpe, M.P.A.
Program Officer, Drug Policy Alliance
<http://www.drugpolicy.org/>
Washington, D.C.

Anti-Hate Group Offers Agenda to Fight Racist Flyer

Recently local operatives of the National Alliance – “the largest and most active neo-Nazi organization in the United States,” according to the Anti-Defamation League – have been distributing in the Quad Cities a hate-filled flyer entitled “Fight for Your Race.” Some residents have been horrified to find this hate propaganda on their lawns wrapped in plastic bags with copies of such free publications as the *Thrifty Nickel* and the *River Cities’ Reader*, which are not usually home-delivered. We have determined that these publications were not involved in this distribution, and therefore are also victims of this hate group.

The hate flyer advertises a “Pro-White Video Game” available from a record company owned by the National Alliance. The “game” is no game; it is an intensely evil racist and anti-Semitic attempt to capture converts, especially young converts, for this hate movement.

This is a clear effort by the neo-Nazi National Alliance to lure our Quad Cities youth into a movement like that of Adolph Hitler and his ilk nearly 75 years ago. The Quad Cities Anti-Hate Coalition urges all Quad Citians to be aware of this effort, and to join with us in clearly and loudly denouncing and rejecting it.

We also urge these actions:

(1) That our local new media understand that the National Alliance does not seek publicity. They seek converts, and they will succeed if this community allows them to operate in the dark and in secret. The media needs to expose them at every opportunity. To wait until they have done something illegal or newsworthy will only play into their hands.

(2) That every local law-enforcement agency take advantage of training resources on how to respond to hate groups. One such program is “Introduction to Hate & Bias Crimes” provided online by Auburn University Montgomery, Southern Poverty Law Center, and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. The Quad Cities Anti-Hate Coalition will pay for this program for local law-enforcement agencies.

(3) That parents and educators beware! Our young people are the target of sophisticated marketing techniques utilizing music, video games, clothing, and the Internet to recruit them into this hate group. Use your parental/educational authority and influence to protect them from this.

(4) That every mayor and school superintendent, and every other person in a position of leadership, should speak out clearly and quickly against such hate-mongering activities each time the purveyors of hate act. We need our leaders to lead us away from hatred and to lead us toward respect and acceptance for everyone.

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Surely September 11 taught us that seemingly small acts of hatred if ignored can lead to tragic acts of terrorism.

Quad Cities Anti-Hate Coalition

Pastor Alfred K. Beck

Rabbi Henry Jay Karp

Reverend Charles R. Landon Jr.

Reverend A. Parker Lewis III

Rock Island

Nuclear Storage Not a “National Security” Issue

I wish to dispel a sort of myth that is being perpetrated on the American public, for the sake of alleged “national security.”

The controversial Yucca Mountain high-level radioactive-waste dump will soon be voted on in the U.S. Senate. It has already been approved by the House, citing one highly inaccurate mantra as justification: “Keeping high-level radioactive waste in one well-guarded facility out in the desert is wiser and safer than leaving it scattered in 103 private sites near centers of population” or some variant of this statement.

But what the nuclear industry and its allies have repeatedly failed to mention is that by law, a nuclear reactor can operate only if it maintains an operational spent-fuel pool. If the pool closes, the reactor closes. Period. So even after Yucca Mountain opens, there will still scattered “nuclear-waste sites” in full operation.

I would also like to point out that Yucca Mountain does not meet federal or environmental-safety standards, and is an obvious case of blatant environmental racism. If federal agencies followed the rules, it would never be built.

- The site leaks like a sieve, failing to meet Safe Drinking Water Act standards. There is too much radioactivity making its way into groundwater, so the EPA enlarged the affected area, thus diluting radioactivity to the point that it would meet federal standards. The tribes that inhabit reservations in the area would be directly exposed to this.

- Federal nuclear-waste law calls for a “geologic” repository. When it was determined that the geology of Yucca Mountain wouldn’t contain radioactivity, the Department of Energy changed the site-suitability rules to assert that man-made containment structures would do the trick.

- Not only does the site fail to meet standards set by the federal government, but the issue of transport safety has yet to be addressed by this administration. The route involves 43 states, with 8,073 shipments coming through Iowa alone.

It is time to stop exploiting the “threat of terrorism” as a means to promote special interests. Building more nuclear plants, and reissuing licenses to those that have consistently failed to meet basic safety regulations, has nothing to do with “national security.” National security lies in

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the practice of strengthening and enforcing federal regulations, and seeking real solutions for transportation and storage of high-level radioactive waste.

The only way to truly ensure “national security,” then, is to break our dependence on fossil fuels, phase out dangerous, outdated nuclear facilities, and actively endeavor to initiate a national transition to clean, renewable-energy sources.

For more information on “Radioactive Roads & Rails,” contact the Nuclear Information Resource Service at (<http://www.nirs.org>).

Knowledge is power!

Leslie Perrigo
Davenport

British Woman Seeks Iowa Father

I am English and I was born in England in July 1945. I would like to appeal to your readers to help me try to trace my father who was from Iowa, although I do not know from which part. His surname was Patterson and he was in the U.S. Navy. Regretfully I do not know his first name, although the names John, Gene, and Eugene I believe are possibilities. If he is still alive, he would now be around 80 years of age. He was of stocky build, medium height, and had blue eyes. Toward the end of the Second World War he was stationed somewhere on the south coast of England, most probably in Hampshire, Dorsetshire, or Devonshire. With such little information to go on, the task of tracing him, or his family, has been extremely difficult. Indeed, over the past seven years I have written approximately 6,000 letters in my quest to trace him but so far without any success. I know that tracing one's roots is a subject very dear to the hearts of many Americans, and this English girl with an American father shares those same ideals. If any of your readers can help with any information, however small, I can be contacted at the e-mail address valeriebergson@aol.com or by telephone at 44 1202 518721.

Valerie Bergson
England