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PROBABILITY THAT DEMS RETAIN CONTROL			PROBABILITY OF GOP TAKEOVER			PROBABLE GAIN IN GOP GOVERNORSHIPS		



Steve Bloom
 Publisher, [CelebStoner.com](#)
 Posted: October 28, 2010 07:19 PM

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Legalization or Bust: A Brief History of Marijuana Prohibition

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Peter Tosh's prophetic anthem "Legalize It" is sounding pretty good these days. Since the former Wailer penned the reggae tune in 1976, the legalization movement has come a long way. Still, others may say: What's taking so long?

America's longest prohibition dates back to 1937 -- the "Reefer Madness" era when the country's earliest anti-drug zealots (led by former head of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, Harry J. Anslinger) convinced a gullible public that marijuana caused people to commit unspeakable acts of depravity, such as when the hopped-up stoner runs over an elderly man in the guffaw-inducing exploitation flick.

While most Americans no longer accept the bald-faced lies that propelled the campaign to ban marijuana for all its uses -- recreational as well as industrial (hemp) and medical -- it remains an uphill battle to counter the government's standard-issue pot propaganda, such as increased harm due to greater potency, the gateway theory that marijuana leads to hard drugs and suggestions that cannabis use [causes cancer](#) (quite the opposite, actually).

Our hidden marijuana history contradicts the most outlandish claims. Though used for pain relief in the 19th and early 20th centuries in the U.S., synthetic drugs would replace cannabis and other natural remedies as the pharmaceuticals industry expanded after World War II. The same could be said for hemp - cannabis' versatile relative. Despite being the material on which the Declaration of Independence was written, and its use as rope and sails for ships (see "[Hemp for Victory](#)," the 1943 government short extolling the marijuana's industrial virtues), as seed for birds and as fiber for clothing, hemp was also curiously phased out in favor of cotton and synthetics such as nylon.

Marijuana's emergence as the drug of choice of the '60s had little to do with medicinal and industrial applications and everything to do with its profound power to intoxicate an entire

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generation. While parents popped pills and drank martinis, the younger generation (dubbed hippies) [smoked pot and chugged Boone's Farm wine](#).

By 1970, for the first time a political movement began to coalesce around legalizing marijuana. Founded by a lawyer, [NORML](#) (National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws) would put a serious face on an issue whose time had come.

Turning up the propaganda machine, Richard Nixon answered with the "War on Drugs." In 1961, the U.S. had signed on to the [International Single Convention Treaty](#), which divided illegal and legal drugs into [four schedules](#), placing marijuana along with heroin and LSD in Schedule I, which is defined as having "no currently accepted medical use" and a "high potential for abuse." (Cocaine and morphine are in Schedule II.) The [Controlled Substances Act of 1970](#) implemented these schedules. And in 1973, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) was formed to enforce these schedules, focusing primarily on marijuana - the most widely-used illegal drug.

With Nixon's impeachment around the corner and the Democrats ready to take over the White House, the prospects of liberalizing the marijuana laws seemed very likely. Twelve states voted to decriminalize pot in the '70s, most while Jimmy Carter was in office. Carter [voiced support](#) for decrim, but soon backed off as another Republican backlash loomed and Carter's second term was in jeopardy.

The '80s was hardly a pothead's paradise. Americans took their cues from Ronald Reagan -- an aging actor turned President -- and his headline-grabbing wife, who together ratcheted up the drug-war with their "Just Say No" rhetoric. With cocaine use up and pot down, it took the crack epidemic of the mid-'80s to spur marijuana's gradual reemergence as a safer alternative to the drugs it was supposedly a gateway to.

At the same time, largely thanks to instructions and pictorials in High Times magazine, smokers began to take control of the means of production, growing their own small crops in basements, closets, spare rooms and backyards. Rather than face detection, many went indoors, simulating the outdoor environment using soil or soil-less mediums to create bushy plants that could feed a family of stoners or the whole block. What was exclusively a smuggler's business in the '60s and '70s shifted to domestic cultivation in the '80s and '90s. Now more than [50%](#) of the marijuana consumed is grown in the U.S.

As a result of yet another political shift from Republican to Democrat, new life was breathed into the marijuana legalization cause when Bill Clinton arrived in Washington in 1993. He may not have inhaled, but Clinton's White House projected tolerance and soon pot was "hot" again, just like in the '70s.

However, this time, rather than decrim, medical marijuana would be the new call to arms. It proved highly successful, first winning in California ([Prop 215](#)) in 1996 and sweeping across the nation with [13 additional states](#) voting or passing legislation that allows patients to medicate with pot.

Those opposing medical cannabis viewed it as a stalking horse for complete legalization, and they were right. In states like California and [Colorado](#), where more than 600,000 people have doctor's recommendations and nearly 3,000 dispensaries cater to those with ailments ranging from debilitating diseases to insomnia, qualifying is generally not a problem, as long as you can afford the \$150 doctor's consultation.

Stores up and down the California coast and across the Colorado Rockies now stock a full range of colorfully named marijuana strains and edible products. You really don't need go to a dealer any longer in these states (count Montana in as well) to acquire marijuana. It's de facto legalization.

But because of the rapid spread of dispensaries in California, Colorado and Montana, countries, cities and towns have enacted moratoriums, ordinances, regulations and outright bans to get a handle on this new pot economy. Until Barack Obama took over the White House in 2009, the DEA under G.W. Bush regularly raided pot shops and busted patients. That changed when Obama's Attorney General Eric Holder ordered U.S. attorneys to back off. Though the Feds have stopped bashing in dispensaries' doors, the Los Angeles City Council recently passed an [ordinance](#) to close as many as 800 shops. Still, Oakland has forged ahead, taxing marijuana (10%) and licensing [large-scale grow operations](#) that will supply the city's four dispensaries. There's a good reason why they call it Oaksterdam.

Which brings us to [Prop 19](#) -- or the Regulate, Control and Tax Cannabis Act of 2010 - which is on the California ballot on November 2. It's not the first time voters have had a chance to "tax and regulate" marijuana. Similar initiatives failed twice each in Alaska (2000, 2004) and Nevada (2002, 2006). What's different now is the county's mood. Still battling a recession, marijuana is being seen as a boon, if not savior, to California's staggering economy. With a 10% tax in place, based on sales of [\\$14 billion per year](#) worth of marijuana, that's a potential \$1.4 billion raised in taxes. Considering that California, like most states, can barely pay its bills, Prop 19 has to be

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Top 5 Rally Signs To Restore Sanity (and/or Fear)



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Stewart: "We Live in Hard Times, Not End Times"

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Roundtable: Politics of Comedy

mighty tempting -- even to the gubernatorial candidates Jerry Brown and Meg Whitman, both of whom are currently opposed to the tax-pot initiative.

What are the drug warriors saying about Prop 19? Nothing new, as you might expect. They mouth their usual concerns: use will rise, minors will have easier access, emergency room visits will skyrocket, blah, blah, blah. The most ludicrous argument is: "We have enough problems with alcohol and tobacco, we don't need pot legal too." Let's examine: Tobacco-related deaths and ailments remain at epidemic levels ([440,000 deaths per year](#)). Alcohol related deaths: 110,000. All hard drug deaths: [17,000](#). Marijuana: zero.

This is the argument pot smoker's can't lose. But smoking anything causes cancer, right? Wrong. Though combusting cannabis creates tar and carbon monoxide, this still doesn't lead to cancer, And studies are now showing that marijuana [may inhibit the growth of tumors](#). Marijuana cures cancer? Very possibly.

Potheads are not dummies, no matter what the government and all those Partnership for a Drug Free America TV spots would lead you to believe. Stoners practice what is known as harm reduction on a daily basis. Countering the low-grade imported weed from Mexico, Jamaica and Colombia (a.k.a schwag), home growers converted to sinsemilla (seedless female plants), increasing potency from 2% THC to anywhere from 10% to 25% levels. Not only is domestic weed prettier to look at and smells like roses, you need to smoke less to get high.

Rather than toke out of metal and plastic pipes and bongs, stoners shifted to glass -- a cleaner alternative. There are even so-called "clear" papers made out of cellulose that are safer than standard bleached rolling papers and will save trees.

But the biggest harm reducer is the vaporizer. You might even call it the equalizer. No flame is necessary for these space-aged looking contraptions. A heating device vaporizes marijuana rather than combusts it, preventing the creation of tar and carbon monoxide. Medical patients swear by vaporizers, and so do more and more daily smokers.

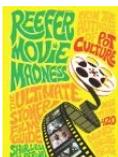
Clearly, marijuana doesn't kill or cause cancer. So then it's worst harm has to be getting arrested. Nearly [900,000](#) Americans were busted for pot in 2008. About 5% of that total, 46,000, took place in New York, which has been dubbed, "[The Marijuana Arrest Capital of the World](#)," thanks to two successive mayors, Guiliani and Bloomberg, who have had no sympathy for the city's pot-smoking citizens.

Second worst harm? Failing a drug test. An entire new industry was founded in the '80s to detect small amounts of illegal drugs in people's urine. Marijuana is by far the easiest drug to detect, since its metabolites remain in the body's tissues for up to 45 days after smoking. So, let's say you puffed at a party on the 10th, got randomly tested on the 20th and flunked the test. What exactly does this have to do with your work performance? Absolutely nothing. And now they can test hair, saliva, your work station for residue. Drug testing clearly targets those who choose to recreate with marijuana. Smoke pot or lose your job? It's a tough call.

Perhaps even more harmful is the stereotyping of marijuana smokers as lazy, dumb, slow, passive, apathetic, memory-challenged junk-food addicts. Though anti-drug organizations like the Partnership gladly re-enforce all of these supposed stoner traits, the media has piled on with constant jokey references to pot-heads adding "dude" to every sentence (ok, maybe that one's true, dude) with their groggy heads buried in colossal sized bags of Doritos. Stephen Colbert is one of the biggest perpetrators of this archetype.

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Bloom

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Buzzby 11:15 PM on 10/30/2010
3 Fans

"the media has piled on with constant jokey references to pot-heads adding "dude" to every sentence (ok, maybe that one's true, dude) with their groggy heads buried in colossal sized bags of Doritos. Stephen Colbert is one of the biggest perpetrators of this archetype."
 Haven't you figured out that everything Colbert says is the opposite of what he means? He pretends to be a blowhard ignorant right-wing pundit. His overwrought references to cannabis consumers is a parody of Limbaugh and his ilk, and are completely in character.

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fumes 10:03 AM on 10/30/2010

339 Fans



i hope it passes..

cotton jeans take waay too long to dry!

other cotton clothes too..

Reply

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MalcolmKyle 05:55 AM on 10/30/2010

17 Fans

Let's look at a comparative analysis of the levels of cannabis use in two cities: Amsterdam and San Francisco, which was published in the American Journal of Public Health May 2004,

The San Francisco prevalence survey showed that 39.2% of the population had used cannabis. This is 3 times the prevalence found in the Amsterdam sample

Source: Craig Reinerman, Peter D.A. Cohen and Hendrien L. Kaal, The Limited Relevance of Drug Policy

<http://www.mapinc.org/lib/limited.pdf>

Moreover, 51% of people who had smoked cannabis in San Francisco reported that they were offered heroin, cocaine or amphetamine the last time they purchased cannabis. In contrast, only 15% of Amsterdam residents who had ingested marijuana reported the same conditions. Prohibition is the 'Gateway Policy' that forces cannabis seekers to buy from criminals who gladly expose them to harder drugs.

The Dutch justice ministry announced, last year, the closure of eight prisons and cut 1,200 jobs in the prison system. A decline in crime has left many cells empty. There's simply not enough criminals http://www.nrc.nl/international/article2246821.ece/Netherlands_to_close_prisons_for_lack_of_criminals

For further information, kindly check out this very informative FAQ provided by Radio Netherlands:

<http://www.rnw.nl/english/article/faq-soft-drugs-netherlands>

or go to this page: <http://www.rnw.nl/english/dossier/Soft-drugs>

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER

dbrett480 22 hours ago (2:03 PM)

40 Fans



Thanks for the good sources. The drug issue in the Netherlands is not cut and dry. The city of Maastricht is even thinking of cutting down on the number of coffeeshops because the marijuana tourism has caused an influx of criminals peddling other drugs and preying on tourists who are under the influence.

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER

Elbrando 05:35 PM on 10/29/2010

379 Fans



Very good article with one exception. The comparison of Marijuana usage and gay rights. People are born gay. People are not born marijuana users. I'm in favor of people being allowed to use marijuana, but do not think they are born to use marijuana.

I hope Proposition 19 wins.

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER

ray christl 15 hours ago (8:21 PM)

267 Fans



You are born with THC in your brain-2 types. We have a symbiosis relationship with cannabis and our endocannabinoid system throughout our mind and immune response.

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Michael Dreher 04:40 PM on 10/29/2010

1 Fans

After all this debate has been put out in the open I don't understand what the fear is about. Instead of having a black market still run by large drug cartels there will be large corporations instead. Since the

practices of these businesses can be monitored tax revenues will be collected and jobs created. This bill is putting the power of regulation back in the governments hands. Sure there are other forms of illegal business that will keep the cartels going but the sooner cannabis is taken out of their revenue stream, the sooner these organizations can be dismantled. With such a high percentage of users in California and the United States I am sure that a significant chunk of the profits of organized crime is coming from cannabis alone. The individuals who are voting no for legalization fail to realize that those individuals who use cannabis already exist whether it is legal or not. There may be an initial spike in use from the media attention but statistics will fall right back to where they have been. At least there will be regulations set in place as to the quality of cannabis individuals will be receiving. You don't go to the grocery store everyday wondering if you are going to purchase vegetables or a bottle of wine that contains carcinogenic pesticides do you ?

Please take a look at my blog for further comments. There are some interesting articles and great documented information available.

www.sinsemillabile.blogspot.com



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RENAMED Concerned Parent 04:36 PM on 10/29/2010

14 Fans

Jesus said, Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. (Matthew 7:12).

I know I would not want my child sent to jail with the sexual predators, or my aging parents to have their house confiscated and sold by the police, over a little marijuana.

We can change the world when we vote.



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Patriot86 01:42 PM on 10/29/2010

353 Fans  Follow



I hope it does pass...I am sick of this unending drug war.



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Brian Mosley 01:39 PM on 10/29/2010

7 Fans

First, I have to say that there's a reason no one grows tobacco in their back yard. First of all, it's to cheap to make it economical. (A pound of tobacco is around \$30) Second, it's ILLEGAL. You will go to prison. It's tax evasion, and ATF will show up at your house.

To those who don't think Prop 19 goes far enough, is that what you're after?

That being said, marijuana legalization is DEFINITELY a civil rights issue. Not because it incarcerates minorities at an proportional level, even though it does. It's because it should be our choice what we do with our bodies, as long as it does not affect the health/safety of others.

Drugs are supposed to be illegal because they're bad. Saying that it's currently illegal and that makes it bad proves why prohibition is wrong: Locking people up, drug testing for every job, and giving a large portion of our youth criminal records is by far more harmful than sitting back at night and relaxing with a fat joint.



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duncan20903 02:02 AM on 10/30/2010

10 Fans

What ever gives you the idea that growing tobacco for personal use is illegal? Perhaps you are confused because it is (was) illegal to sell the tobacco into the market. Go Google 'homegrown tobacco' or 'tobacco seeds'.

In the last decade they have made some major changes to the tobacco distribution chain and it may now be legal to grow and sell tobacco without a license.



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HUFFPOST PUNDIT

lightningbolt 12:07 PM on 10/29/2010

619 Fans



The only reason marijuana and hemp are illegal is because corporate interests are making huge profits from prohibition. The fight to legalize marijuana and hemp is part of the fight against the corporatocracy which seeks to enslave us all.



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RAMstein 11:42 AM on 10/29/2010

76 Fans

Boone's Farm.....now THAT was schwag! (Never knew Jamaican or Colombian to be schwag - the ditchweed all came from domestic sources like Kansas.)

Whatever...all CA residents, please turn out and vote YES

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steelwheels 11:18 AM on 10/29/2010

9 Fans

Tomorrow is the last day of 'early voting' here in Texas.

No lines, walk right up to a machine and VOTE.

They say the rest of the country follows Cali's lead.

Don't let us down. You want Change? You have the Power to bring it about.

Pull the lever, then Puff, Puff, Pass. The rest of the Country will follow.

New York is chomping at the bit to be Oaksterdam East.

Make it Happen...

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Nathan Kilgore 11:18 AM on 10/29/2010

4 Fans

One of the things we are learning is that California's justice system will finally be free of the responsibility to punish, except when it comes to underage smokers. Thousands and thousands of good officers and prison officials can make room for the real criminals. If the Feds want to man up several thousand officers and begin an unpopular crackdown, it will go something like the border surge. Excuses will follow after a few "examples" are set by them targeting higher profile distributors and then it will end.

Make no mistake. Vote YES on 19 and show the outpouring and overwhelming tsunami of political backing this proposition needs. This message will go a long way to show the future political careers of any who oppose this. Come after us---- look for a new job!

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duncan20903 01:55 AM on 10/30/2010

10 Fans

Did you know that at the start of 2010 LA had a backlog of almost 13,000 rape kits? Did you know at least 500 just got tossed in the garbage because they didn't get the testing done within the statute of limitations? A quick Google search tells me that the SoL is 7 years. 7 years and they couldn't even run a few DNA tests. But LA still found plenty of money and time to go knock over a few medical cannabis dispensaries. Who cares if a few hundred or even a few thousand rapists get away with it? If you must commit rape I'd say that LA is the most rapist friendly jurisdiction in the US.

Do the know nothing prohibitionists have even an inkling how the war on (some) drugs is perverting our way of life?

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gems 11:10 AM on 10/29/2010

16 Fans

I don't smoke pot, but it should be legalized.

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Amber Renee Ladd 10:54 AM on 10/29/2010

6 Fans

Hear that? It's the sound of the world changing.

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drowningboy 10:52 AM on 10/29/2010

0 Fans

Important Pro 19 interview!!!

<http://slumwords.wordpress.com/2010/10/20/things-are-heating-up-around-here/>

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