

NEWS RELEASE: PAUL REVERE RIDES AGAIN...!!!

June has been a very good month for marijuana proponents. Coincidental to the 40-year anniversary of Nixon's declared War On Drugs, a 19-member Global Commission on Drug Policy issued a scathing report to the United Nations eulogizing the “devastating consequences” of drug-war actions “for individuals and societies around the world.”

The Commission's 24-page report heralded a quantum leap forward for activist groups such as Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (LEAP), Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP), the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) and a seemingly endless list of others who have over decades been saying exactly the same things that the report concludes.

“The global war on drugs has failed [and] is now causing more harm than drug abuse itself,” the Commission boldly declares. “This [blackmarket] industry has empowered organized criminals, corrupted governments at all levels, eroded internal security, stimulated violence, and distorted both economic markets and moral values [resulting in] decades of failed and futile drug war policies. Act urgently: the war on drugs has failed, and policies need to change now.”

In quick response to the Commission's call for political leaders to closely examine the scientific evidence which “overwhelmingly demonstrates that repressive strategies will not solve the drug problem, and that the war on drugs has not, and cannot, be won,” Reps. Barney Frank (D-MA) and Ron Paul (R-TX) almost immediately proposed legislation to end the federal prohibition of cannabis.

H.B. 2306, the Ending Federal Marijuana Prohibition Act of 2011, would remove marijuana from the federal schedule of controlled substances, and reaffirm the rights of the voters of each state to make decisions about how or if the cannabis-hemp plant, its cultivation and the production of commercial goods related to it are to be regulated, if at all, without federal interference.

Co-sponsored by Democratic Reps. John Conyers (MI), Steve Cohen (TN), Jared Polis (CO) and Barbara Lee (CA), in accord of legislative due process, the proposed legislation has been submitted to the House Judiciary Committee and must be approved (ie: 'passed out of committee') before it can be debated by the full House of Representatives. And there are many more steps beyond that which the proposed legislation will have to pass through, including ultimately being signed by the President, before it becomes the law of the land. However, this is the first time in the long and tumultuous history of marijuana debate that a bill mandating the end of federal prohibition has been introduced. Thus the activists celebrate.

Still, the Commission's appeal for “open and honest dialogue regarding the failure of global drug policies” has a long way to go to make law and is now poised at the first hurdle to passage. Congressman Lamar Smith, representing the 21st Congressional District of Texas (Austin, Kerrville, San Antonio) serves as the head of the House Judiciary Committee and has reportedly stated strong opposition to H.B. 2306.

To forward the momentum of public awareness on this critical issue, the Arkansas affiliate of the national Willie Nelson Teapot Party (which formed last November as part of the nationwide surge of support for the esteemed musician subsequent to his arrest for possession of pot in Texas, and now boasts over 70,000 members on its Facebook), has joined in a 'Paul Revere Rally', the objective of which, according to Arkansas Teapot Party spokesperson Richard Morton is to “get people informed about what is going on so we can work together to straighten things out.”

Once aware of the facts, Morton encourages people to get involved with writing, calling, emailing and faxing the members of the House Judiciary Committee with support for H.B. 2306.

“This is not really about pot,” Morton asserts. “It is about liberty and justice. It is about our 'unalienable' rights as citizens. It is about us telling our own government to mind its own business and calling a halt to some of the nonsense that has been going on, like putting people in jail for growing plants.”

Statistically, the number of people incarcerated for nonviolent drug offenses has increased more than twelvefold since 1980. Some 7.2 million people are now either in prison or on probation or parole — more than 3 percent of all American adults.

“We've got to get back to common sense basics,” Morton summarized. “We've got to speak out.”

More info about all of the groups referenced above can be found on Facebook or elsewhere on the Internet. Messages can be left for Congressman Lamar Smith, head of the House Judiciary Committee, at his Washington DC office (202-225-4236) or through the main number for the House Judiciary Committee (202-225-3951).

The Arkansas Teapot Party meets regularly in Mountain Home, Arkansas. The next regular meeting is set for 11am, Saturday, July 9, 2011, at the Baxter County Public Library. For more information, contact Morton at 870-405-5512, email gozarks@gmail.com or visit www.gocannabis.wordpress.com

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