



SSVMS Posit: Legalize Marijuana, Cocaine, and Heroin?

THE RECENT Sierra Sacramento Valley Medicine e.forum posit was: "**Marijuana, cocaine, and heroin should be legalized and heavily taxed like cigarettes, with tax proceeds used for education and treatment.**" Of our respondents, 69 agreed, 103 disagreed, 4 had no opinion. Comments were offered by 34 individuals.

The "disagree" total includes 10 people who stated that marijuana should be "legalized" but not cocaine or heroin. It seems likely that others who disagreed felt the same way but did not comment. Even so, 40 percent of respondents agreed to the aggressive posit. Those who agreed were most likely to comment.

This not a scientific poll, but simply a way for our members to exchange opinions. Comments do not reflect the position of the SSVMS Board of Directors or the Editorial Committee. Commentary was extensive, and can be read in its pristine form in the on line version of this magazine. Several edited comments appear below:

"Judge James P. Gray's book, *Why Our Drug Laws Have Failed and What We Can Do About It*, offers a cogent and lucid analysis of this problem. (see <http://www.judgejimgray.com>.) He persuasively presents the success of decriminalization in Switzerland and elsewhere. The beneficiaries of the War on Drugs are the criminals, those who are corrupted by them, and the prison industry. The rest of us pay dearly for the many adverse consequences of that counterproductive program." - *Lee Welter*

"It is morally reprehensible to exploit addiction disorders as a means to subsidize unrelated social objectives." - *Karen Tait*

"Marijuana certainly should be legalized for adults and treated as alcohol and nicotine, but opiates need to be managed thru decriminalization, not legalization, with provisions for management for those addicted thru special clinics. Stimulants are a more complex problem, and probably need to be managed thru current criminal laws with provisions for research into alternatives." - *John McCarthy*

"I don't think legalizing these drugs will result in their control or decreased usage nor get rid of the black market.... I think the Netherlands tried this and it didn't work." - *R.J. Frink*

"Oral marijuana is already available in medicinal form. It does not even require a triplicate, while cocaine is available to some ENT physicians, heroin is unobtainable under any circumstance. I would not be opposed to legalizing marijuana with the same controls that alcohol have.... Cocaine and heroin on the other hand are too addictive and destructive, and should NOT be legalized under any circumstances." - *Sydney Scudder*

"As with alcohol, only for adults. It is the illegality that boosts the street price and leads to crime. Interdiction of import does not work. Consumption is always an individual choice." - *Kevin Ryan*

"I agree that all drugs should be legalized." - *Lisa Wang*

"I couldn't agree more. The criminalization of drugs in this country is responsible for a huge amount of healthcare expenditure, and creates a tremendous public health risk." -

Rachel Kreps-Falk

"Legalization is not an appropriate response to a failing law enforcement. More law enforcement is what is needed with more stringent penalties." - *Kelly Sharrar*

Go to <http://www.ssvms.org/articles/positmarijuana.asp> to read further comments by members regarding this posit.

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