

## Saving Lives from Overdoses

We supported Washington's enactment of the second 911 Good Samaritan law in the nation, providing immunity from drug possession charges to individuals who seek medical assistance in overdose situations. Visit <http://StopOverdose.org> for more information on this important law.

## Legalizing and Regulating Cannabis

We support the legalization of cannabis for adult use and regulation of commercial production and distribution. Doing so would save Washington millions annually in criminal justice costs and generate tax revenue that could be directed to better strategies for reducing drug abuse than arresting people and locking them up. These changes would also end the unfair long-term consequences of cannabis convictions, which disproportionately impact people of color and young people, and deal a significant blow to criminal organizations profiting from currently illicit transactions.

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## LITIGATION

The ACLU represents individuals and groups in cases that will have a broad impact on people's civil liberties and rights.

## Protecting Patient Privacy

The ACLU of Washington teamed with the ACLU's national Drug Law Reform Project to quash a federal grand jury subpoena for medical marijuana patient records. The court found that protecting a state's medical marijuana law, the confidentiality of patient records, and the doctor-patient relationship outweighed the federal government's need for the sensitive records. (*In Re: The Matter of the Grand Jury Subpoena for THCF Medical Clinic Records*, 2007)



## Ending Suspicionless Student Drug Testing

The ACLU fought an eight-year battle on behalf of two families and gained a landmark decision ending a degrading practice that treated student athletes as suspects. The Washington Supreme Court found that suspicionless urine testing of students who participate in extracurricular athletic activities is unconstitutional. (*York v. Wahkiakum School District*, 2008)

## Supporting Workers' Rights to Make Medical Decisions

The Washington Supreme Court is considering whether an employer can fire an employee solely for the lawful, at-home medical use of cannabis. The ACLU has submitted an amicus brief in the case arguing that employers should not be able to interfere with an employee's medical decisions. (*Roe v. TeleTech*)

Prepared by the ACLU of Washington Foundation, updated May 2011

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

### START A CONVERSATION

The most important action you can take as an American concerned about the War on Drugs is to exercise your right to freedom of speech. Start a conversation!

The ACLU of Washington offers several resources to help you get started:

- Free "Marijuana: It's Time for a Conversation" video, booklets, and website buttons and banners at [www.MarijuanaConversation.org](http://www.MarijuanaConversation.org)
- "Drug Policy" pages on our website at [www.aclu-wa.org](http://www.aclu-wa.org), where you can also sign up to be notified of opportunities for action via the **E-mail Activist Network**
- Publications on drug policy issues available for download at [www.aclu-wa.org/publications](http://www.aclu-wa.org/publications)
- **Public speakers** available free for presentations to your professional, community, and civic organizations

### SUPPORT THE ACLU

The American Civil Liberties Union is our nation's guardian of liberty. We work daily in courts, legislatures, and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties that the Constitution guarantees everyone in this country. The ACLU is nonprofit and nonpartisan, with more than 500,000 members and supporters nationwide and more than 25,000 in Washington.

It takes a lot of time, resources, and dedicated volunteers to safeguard liberty. We hope you'll join with others in supporting the work of the ACLU. To learn how, please visit us on the web at [www.aclu-wa.org](http://www.aclu-wa.org).

ACLU of Washington

## Drug Policy Project



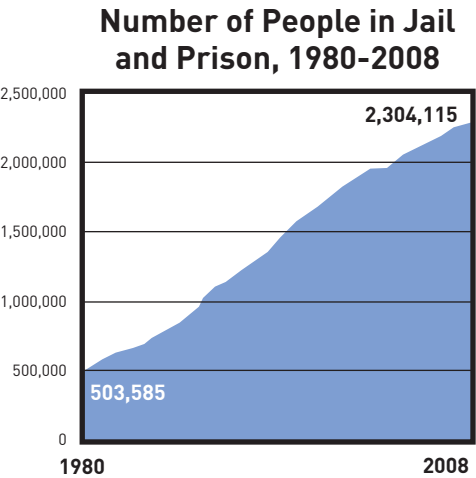
Working to End  
the War on Drugs



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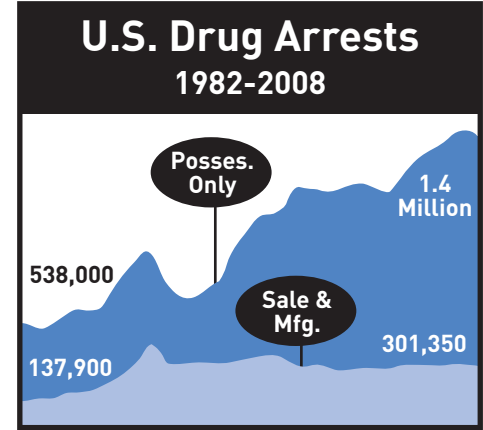
Since President Nixon declared a “War on Drugs” in 1971, the United States has treated drug use primarily as a crime rather than a public health matter. Emphasizing punishment over regulation, education, and treatment has produced devastating results.

- Our nation, which represents 5 percent of the world’s population, now houses **25 percent of the world’s inmates**. Half of all federal prisoners are behind bars for drug offenses, and the number of drug offenders in state prisons has increased thirteen-fold since 1980.

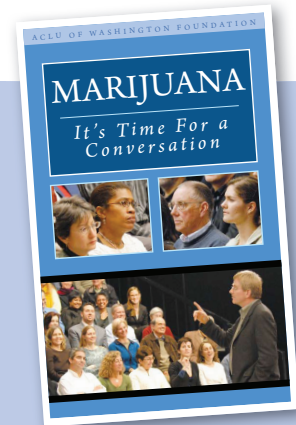


- Although drug use rates are pretty much the same across races and ethnicities, **people of color** are arrested, prosecuted, and jailed for drug offenses at much higher rates.
- **Unconstitutional searches and seizures, entrapment, electronic surveillance,** and other undesirable police practices have become commonplace.
- An immensely profitable and **unregulated black market** has developed, contributing significantly to the growth and prosperity of organized criminal groups.

- **More than a trillion tax dollars** have gone to enforce existing drug laws, but escalating enforcement has not led to a corresponding reduction in either drug use or availability.
- **Millions of Americans** have been subjected to excessive criminal punishment and the **loss of civil rights** – like the right to vote – simply because of drug use.



**Ending the “War on Drugs” is essential if we are to improve public health and safety, eliminate racial injustices, and restore our civil rights and liberties.**



The ACLU-WA’s “**Marijuana: It’s Time for a Conversation**” campaign sparks public conversation about marijuana laws.

**WHAT WE DO**

Our goals are to **advance civil liberties, reduce incarceration, and promote racial justice** by replacing reliance on criminal sanctions with approaches that treat drug use as a public health concern. The Project engages in a range of activities.

**1 PROVIDING INFORMATION, PROMOTING DIALOGUE**

Open and informed public discussion of the War on Drugs and possible alternatives is essential to reforming our laws and policies.

**Marijuana: It’s Time for a Conversation**

The Project is collaborating with travel writer **Rick Steves** on a campaign to spark public conversations about our marijuana laws. Tens of thousands of people have viewed our award-winning video on television, at public forums, and on the Internet. Our website **www.MarijuanaConversation.org** has received over 560,000 hits.

**Policy Research and Projects**

Project staff played a leading role in producing the Seattle City Council’s **Marijuana Policy Review Panel** report on the impacts of implementation of Initiative 75, which made adult marijuana use the city’s lowest law enforcement priority.

We commissioned “**The Consequences and Costs of Marijuana Prohibition,**” a research report conducted by two University

of Washington faculty members. The study found that treating marijuana use as a crime was very costly in both financial and human terms, and failed to achieve the government’s goals of reducing availability and use.

Project staff provides strategic advice and assistance to organizations launching and operating demonstration projects that explore alternatives to jailing low-level drug offenders. We served on an advisory group to **Seattle City Council** staff examining the impact such approaches could have on the need to build a new jail.

Project staff has worked with the **University of Washington Department of Sociology** to examine racial disparities in Seattle’s marijuana law enforcement and strategies for reducing our state’s drug overdose death rate.

**2 LEGISLATIVE REFORM**

The ACLU of Washington works with decision-makers to address the harms flowing from the War on Drugs, and to shift from reliance on criminal sanctions toward prevention and treatment of drug abuse.

**Medical Use of Cannabis**

We supported successful efforts that made it easier for health care professionals to authorize the medical use of cannabis; helped friends and family members be recognized as designated providers; and clarified what a “60-day supply” is.

We support further reform to provide patients protection from arrest and access to safe and reliable sources of cannabis.

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