

# THE DRUG WAR: TWO VIEWS

**PUBLIC POLICY:** Legalization would send the wrong message to children.

Judge James Gray's open letter to me ["An open letter to the nation's drug czar," The Orange Grove, Aug. 12] said that education and the honest exchange of information are the only way to reduce the harm wrought upon our country by drug abuse. We agree with him, and for that reason have made the motivation of our youth to reject illegal drugs and substance abuse our No. 1 priority.

Across America, we have been joined by 50 federal departments and agencies, 54 states and territories, 13,000 city governments, 3,200 county governments, 38,000 community anti-drug coalitions, hundreds of public interest groups, research facilities, educational institutions, and professional associations in getting that message out.

It is important that we reach our children, for despite the considerable decrease in illegal drug use in America from 23.3 million in 1985 to 12.8 million today (a drop of over 10 million), the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse released on Aug. 20 showed that in 1995 drug use increased among 12- to 17-year-olds, as it has each year since 1992. According to the University of Michigan's "Monitoring the Future" study, this phenomenon is a result of changes in perception by

bacco, compromises brain function, the immune system, the lungs, and hormonal responses to stress and metabolic change. Prevention professionals believe the legalization of marijuana for any reason will damage efforts to convince young people to remain drug-free.

We encourage all of your readers to take the time to talk to their children about the dangers posed by illegal drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. There is no greater threat to our children's health than that posed by drugs.

**Barry R. McCaffrey**  
Washington, D.C.  
Gen. McCaffrey (Ret.) is director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

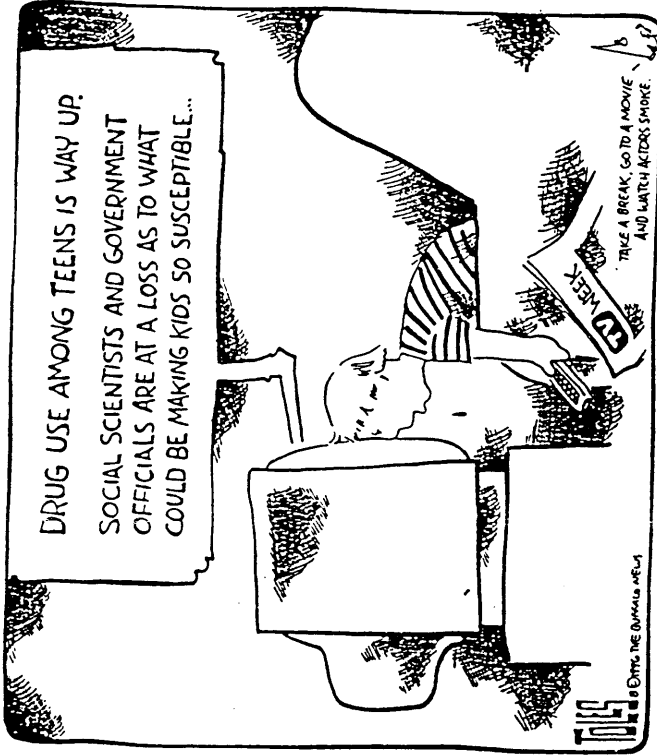
**PUBLIC POLICY: Consider the violence associated with the prohibition of drugs.**

the violence, mayhem, and expense caused by this country's second failed Prohibition. I would hope furthermore that he would conclude, along with other former "drug warriors," that one cannot legislate morality — especially in a country like ours, which still prides at least some lip service to the idea of personal autonomy.

Officer Sayne chooses, instead, to rant about intensifying the battle by throwing even more of our citizens in prisons while simultaneously bombing such places as Mexico and Colombia. His letter also contains interesting little contradictions. On the one hand he admits that we are "losing the war on drugs" and that "I have worked with thousands of narcotics investigations from street level to violators moving multiple tons of drugs." On the other hand he claims that "over 95 percent of our population do not use drugs compared to the 50 percent who use alcohol." I wonder if he is counting such drugs as Ritalin, caffeine, Prozac, nicotine, etc.? Also, since when is alcohol not a drug?

As a Libertarian, I do not care what Officer Sayne believes or says as long as he keeps his nose out of my private affairs. I would suggest, however, that he spend five hours every morning thoughtlessly chanting the words "Just don't do it." In the meantime, I'll stick to my cup of coffee. I may also have a chocolate bar — that is, of course, as long as it continues to be federally approved.

**Gordon Wilson**  
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our young people, who, in increasing numbers, have come to believe that drug abuse is not harmful.

The notion that the way to solve the problem is to legalize specific drugs, such as marijuana for "medical" purposes, is profoundly wrong. Major medical and health organizations like the American Medical Association

**N**arcotics officer Bob Sayne's letter in support of a re-evaluation of the failed War on Drugs. ["The war on drugs," Letters, Sept. 22], had me laughing/crying so hard that I could hardly drink my morning coffee. (Coffee, I hasten to remind him, is still a "legal substance.")

Naturally, I do not expect Officer Sayne, as a "specialist in narcotics," to be opposed to this silly "war" out of any concern for our freedoms. However, I would hope (perhaps naively) that he would have some awareness of

(AMA), American Cancer Society, National Multiple Sclerosis Association, and the American Academy of Ophthalmology condemn production, use, and sale of marijuana and maintain that marijuana should not be legalized. Laboratory research in animals and humans has shown that marijuana, which is more carcinogenic than to-