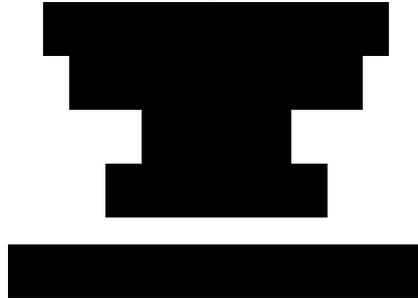


LAW REFORM, ROAD AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Drug Law Reform.

Submission by:

Joe Lenzo



Let me start by stating that I am 73 years old and do not do drugs.

We should be intelligent enough to figure out that prohibition does not solve any problems – take a page out of USA history with alcohol prohibition where the only result was the birth of organized crime that we all suffer from today. Prohibition only creates crime lords and the distribution of illegal monies.

Without a doubt the “war on drugs” is a dismal failure and to continue it in its present form only adds to the problem and the corruption of police, judges and other public officials due to the huge amounts of money involved. Want to see how bad it really is: make it mandatory that all public figures (police, judges, politicians, etc.) must take a drug test each year like athletes do – there will be lot less of them. And, I might suggest that these public officials are much more important to our future and wellbeing than athletes.

I could spend pages and pages documenting why drugs (all drugs) should be decriminalized like in Portugal. Even the legalization of Marijuana in the USA (but a small step) has had nothing but positive results. It took billions of \$\$\$ out of the hands of cartels and put big \$\$\$ into the coffers of Colorado to use for social programs to deal with the drug problem other social problems and schools.

All of the breast-beating by politicians, religious leaders, and police has been found to be unfounded when you look at the results.

- In neither of the instances I mentioned have these become havens for drug addicts. In fact quite the opposite. There was no migration of drug users to these areas.
- Since Portugal decriminalized drugs 14 years ago, governments and drug policy experts around the world have scrutinized data about drug use coming out of the country. Studies in recent years suggest their grand experiment has been a success.
- Portugal had one of the worst heroin epidemics in the Western world. At one point in the 1990s, a staggering 1% of the population was addicted to heroin. Overdoses were rampant, and drug-related deaths from AIDS were the highest in the European Union.
- Portugal now has the second-lowest drug overdose rate of every European country measured in the report. -- Portugal's performance in perspective: Only three people for every million die of a drug overdose in Portugal, which puts one of the Eurozone's poorest countries in a different league than rich international powerhouse Germany (17.6 per million) and in a different universe than social democratic utopia Sweden (69.7 per million).
- The rate of new HIV infections in Portugal has fallen precipitously since 2001, the year its law took effect, declining from 1,016 cases to only 56 in 2012. Overdose deaths decreased from 80 the year that decriminalization was enacted to only 16 in 2012. In the US, by comparison, more than 14,000 people died in 2014 from prescription opioid overdoses alone. Portugal's current drug-induced death rate, three per million residents, is more than five times lower than the European Union's average of 17.3, according to EU figures.

I could continue, page after page, to give evidence that our current processes are not working and there are much more effective ways to address this problem and then go after the root cause of the drug epidemic and to punish the big time drug pushers and cartels.

Granted with the introduction of ICE and “designer drugs” there are complications, however, attacking the problem from a position of “harm reduction” rather than incarceration is the solution. “Warzon” anything seldom works.

I have provided a few, of many, references on this subject and these should be taken into account in dealing with the drug problem. It is certainly worth following then links in these articles. I consider these references as part of my submission and would expect that they would be evaluated and considered.

<https://www.facebook.com/attn/videos/1284654564903333/>

<https://mic.com/articles/120403/14-years-after-decriminalizing-drugs-one-chart-shows-why-portugal-s-experiment-has-worked#.iNWnzaOk>

<https://news.vice.com/article/ungass-portugal-what-happened-after-decriminalization-drugs-weed-to-heroin>

<https://mic.com/articles/126303/where-is-marijuana-legal-in-the-united-states-list-of-recreational-and-medicinal-states#.PIR52tSEx>

<http://www.rogersandmoss.com/blog/14-criminal-law-articles/56-two-years-later-has-the-legalization-of-marijuana-affected-crime-in-colorado>

<http://www.voanews.com/a/legal-marijuana-and-crime/3379448.html>