
AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR DRUG LAW REFORM

& AUSTRALIAN DRUG LAW REFORM FOUNDATION

E-NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2010

About the Groups

The Australian Parliamentary Group on Drug Law Reform

The Australian Parliamentary Group on Drug Law Reform (APGDLR) is a cross party group of 100 MP's from our State and Commonwealth parliaments. The group was set up in 1993 after a meeting in Canberra convened by Michael Moore (ACT Assembly) and Ann Symonds (MLC, NSW).

The Australian Drug Law Reform Foundation

The Australian Drug Law Reform Foundation was established in 1994 when a significant number of people in the community endorsed the Charter for Reform that had been developed by the Parliamentary Group.

The Charter for Reform sets out a series of principles that seek to encourage a more rational, tolerant and humanitarian approach to the problems created by drugs and drug use in Australia.

The APGDLR and the ADLRF meet at least once a year to hear from experts in the field, to share information about what is happening in our jurisdictions and to plan future work. The group also produces occasional newsletters on issues relating to drugs in Australia and international developments.

If you would like more information about the Parliamentary Group or the Foundation or would like more information please contact Dr Mal Washer MP 02 6277 2114 or email Mal.Washer.MP@aph.gov.au or Penny Sharpe MLC on 0292302741 or email Penny.Sharpe@parliament.nsw.gov.au

AUSTRALIA

Should the legal drinking age be raised to reduce road deaths?

Dr Alex Wodak, President of the Australian Drug Law Reform Foundation, writes on 10th February 2010:

LEGAL DRINKING AGE, ROAD TOLLS

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said on ABC TV on Monday night that he would personally like to see the legal drinking age raised to 21 after connecting high rates of P-plater road crash deaths to alcohol consumption.

"If the evidence is there and it is capable of being proven that it works, then we (will) look at these things and make a decision," Rudd said, when asked about the issue by a young person on the Q&A program.

When the Prime Minister expresses concern about the huge impact of alcohol on the community, that is definitely a wonderful development. Rudd referred specifically to "high rates of P-plater road deaths [linked] to alcohol consumption".

Well, are they really high? Or did a few really tragic cases just manage to get enormous publicity on a slow news day? And even if there are high rates of P-plater road crash deaths caused by alcohol, is raising the legal drinking age the most effective way of reducing these deaths?

The Prime Minister called for the evidence on this issue and he deserves praise just for asking to see the evidence. Most politicians decide policy on alcohol and drugs just on gut feelings. But the majority of the evidence on this issue is from the US where the legal drinking age was raised from 18 to 21 in the 1980s. President Reagan forced virtually all the states to raise their legal drinking age by withholding federal funds for highways until they complied. Alcohol consumption and road crash deaths did fall as a result (although cannabis consumption increased).

Australia has much more effective national measures to reduce drink driving than the US. Also, we have had these for a long time. These measures include random breath testing and compulsory car safety belts. Most important, we also have probationary driving licences, essentially for young people, which require zero breath alcohol concentration when driving. This amounts to a finely targeted prohibition of alcohol.

In contrast, raising the legal drinking age from 18 to 21 is, in reality, a poorly targeted prohibition with the likelihood of significant levels of non-compliance and consequently (possibly severe) unintended negative consequences.

Also, raising the legal drinking age from 18 to 21 is fraught with political and ethical problems. Just imagine trying to defend this policy against concerns that a 20-year-old Australian is considered mature enough to vote and even die serving his or her country but not considered mature enough to enjoy a beer with the family at Christmas!

Also, there are more effective ways for Australia to reduce road crash deaths due to alcohol, apart from raising the legal drinking age.

Australia's system for taxing alcohol is ripe for reform just on economic grounds, let alone public health and safety concerns. Alcohol taxes have a substantial impact on price. The higher the price of alcohol, the lower the consumption. Slightly increasing the price of alcohol

is the single most effective prevention measure known. Price increases would be particularly effective in young people because they have lower incomes and therefore less money to spend on alcohol.

The majority of alcohol consumed in a community by young people is drunk at high levels of risk of short-term harms. Even small increases would achieve a worthwhile benefit (and be easier to achieve and sustain). Large increases risk stimulating a black market.

Also, alcohol is too readily available in Australia. We have too many outlets, the conditions for these outlets are too liberal and the drinks industry is too powerful (and the community too weak) in the licensing process.

Expect the drinks industry to weigh into this debate soon with loud cries of "wowsers" and "nanny state".

Ref:

These days a rare sight - a letter to the editor attacking the MSIC (Medically Supervised Injection Centre):

"A costly trial

"Many residents of Kings Cross request that the injecting room not be given permanent status.

"It is illegal to provide drugs in the room, so where do the Government and the council believe the addicts get ice, heroin, cocaine in this case?

"On the streets of Kings Cross criminal dealers illegally trade daily, to the angst of the hardworking Kings Cross police, otherwise there would be no reason for these rooms to exist or to celebrate 3300 lives saved from a drug overdose.

"The Lord Mayor and Dr Van Beek cannot say it is not a honeypot. It is.

"It has resulted in a wasteland of business which the council seeks to ignore. Any public discussion is not allowed at community meetings.

"Many locals are often intimidated seeing the abusive dealers outside our station, working the phone boxes and in back lanes.

"They visit the government-sponsored K2 to be supplied with free syringes (opposite Springfield Mall) in Darlinghurst Rd. Is this the way our high-density village should be?

"What message does this send?

"How many more services must we cope with? The injecting centre should be under a hospital roof as a medical department - which St Vincent's new wing will have, but supporting shooting up illegal drugs is against their policy. On top of this funding there is the management contract with Uniting Care Church who now own the injecting room building. Not something Rev Ted Noffs would have supported.

"Business has been impacted over the years, with banks moving to Macleay St, and outdoor restaurants requested to remove planter boxes due to drug drops and needles. Is this fair? Whose rights come first?

"People are compassionate about the addicted but feel it has been a very costly trial for our village. They do not want both the K2 and injecting room here.

R.E. Hall

Kings Cross"

Wentworth Courier, Wednesday 24/2/2010

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Wednesday, February 24 at 11:00 AM Central European Time (CET)/5:00 AM Eastern Standard Time (EST) /

UN's International Narcotics Control Board's Annual Report

Oversteps Mandate and Interferes with Countries' Sovereignty

The UN's International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) annual report released today pointedly criticizes Argentina, Brazil and Mexico for moving to decriminalize the possession of drugs for personal consumption, cautioning that such moves may "send the wrong message."

The INCB report expresses concern over "the growing movement to decriminalize the possession of controlled drugs" and calls for this movement to be "resolutely countered" by the governments of Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and the United States.

According to the Transnational Institute (TNI) and the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), "the criticisms leveled today clearly overstep the INCB's mandate and constitute unwarranted intrusions into these countries' sovereign decision-making. TNI and WOLA are non-governmental organizations with expertise in both the UN drug control system and Latin American drug policy developments.

In August 2009, Argentina's Supreme Court of Justice declared unconstitutional the punishment of possession of cannabis for personal use. Last year, Mexico, through legislation, decriminalized the possession of drugs for personal consumption. In 2006, Brazil moved to partial decriminalization, replacing prison sentences with treatment and educational measures.

"There are too many consumers and small-time drug offenders overcrowding Latin American jails. This is not only inhumane, it also means justice systems are diverting their scarce resources and attention away from big traffickers," said Pien Metaal, TNI Drugs and Democracy Program Researcher. "Part of the overcrowding problem stems from disproportionate prison sentences for non-violent offenders." Experiences so far with decriminalization of possession of drugs for personal use have not led to significant increases in drug use. In 2001, Portugal decriminalized the possession of all drugs for personal use, and has since seen a decrease in heroin use and in related adverse consequences, such as the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Created in 1968, the INCB monitors implementation of the UN's 1961 and 1971 international drug control conventions, and of the precursor control system established under the 1988 convention. According to TNI and WOLA, the INCB is clearly acting beyond its mandate by criticizing countries' jurisprudence and policies regarding decriminalization.

[Click here to view extracts from the 2009 International Narcotics Control Board Annual Report.](#)

"In the case of the Argentine Supreme Court ruling, it is arrogant interference by the INCB to question the judgment of the highest judicial authority of a sovereign State. The INCB has neither the mandate nor the expertise to challenge such a decision," said Martin Jelsma, TNI Drugs and Democracy Program Coordinator.

The INCB justifies its call to 'resolutely counter' the decriminalization trend by 'reminding' governments of provisions in the 1988 Convention. "But apparently it's the INCB that needs reminding, both about the limits of its own role and about what the treaties actually require," said John Walsh, WOLA Senior Associate. "Not only does the INCB lack the mandate to raise such issues, the INCB misreads the 1988 Convention itself, asserting an absolute obligation to criminalize drug possession when the Convention explicitly affords some flexibility on this matter."

Specifically, the INCB report states that the 1988 Convention requires each party to "establish as a criminal offence [...] the possession, purchase or cultivation of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances for personal consumption/..." However, the INCB report neglects to mention a phrase that is crucial to interpreting the Convention. Article 3, paragraph 2 explicitly states that measures to criminalize possession for personal consumption are subject to each country's "constitutional principles and the basic concepts of its legal system/..." Therefore, subscribing to the 1988 Convention only obligates a country to criminalize possession for personal consumption when that does not present a conflict with a nation's constitutional and legal principles, leaving governments with a certain latitude within the Conventions to reform their laws accordingly. [For more information on the Conventions and the INCB's mandate, click here.](#)

Like last year, the INCB uses its annual report to reprimand Bolivia for the continuation of coca chewing and other traditional uses of coca. In 2008, Bolivia enshrined in its Constitution the coca leaf as a cultural heritage. "The INCB again shows itself to be out of touch with reality by demanding that Bolivia stamp out coca use, also wrongfully prohibited in the Conventions," said TNI's Pien Metaal. "The controversies around Article 3 of the 1988 Convention and the erroneous treatment of the coca leaf in the 1961 Convention are two examples of why the drug control treaty system, including the role played by the INCB, needs to be revised."

[For more information on Latin America's trend toward decriminalization, click here](#)

Contact Kristel Mucino for further information: kmucino@wola.org

THE INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD ON CANNABIS

DrugSense FOCUS Alert #434 - Thursday, 25 February 2010

Today major newspapers across Canada printed articles with headlines like 'Strengthen Medical Marijuana Laws, UN Drug Watchdog Warns' [which appeared in the National Post](#). The key paragraph from the article states "The Vienna-based International Narcotics Control Board said Canada is operating outside international treaty rules aimed at minimizing the risk criminals will get hold of cannabis grown under the program."

The Board has only the power to encourage governments to act in accordance with the United Nations Conventions on Narcotic Drugs. Governments are free to express their sovereignty as their laws allow. The media is more often than not clueless about this.

Understanding this may help you to counter the issues raised in your letters to the editor and your other efforts in support of marijuana law reform.

MAP's news clippings are updated a few times each day at <http://www.drugnews.org/> Some may touch on this issue, but many will not. Most clippings are worthy of consideration for your letter to the editor writing efforts.

Click [here to read the Board's report](#) and [here to read Chapter III, Americas](#).

The paragraph about the United States and cannabis reads as follows:

400. While the consumption and cultivation of cannabis, except for scientific purposes, are illegal activities according to federal law in the United States, several states have enacted laws that provide for the "medical use" of cannabis.⁴¹ The control measures applied in those states for the cultivation of cannabis plants and the production, distribution and use of cannabis fall short of the control requirements laid down in the 1961 Convention. The Board is deeply concerned that those insufficient control provisions have contributed substantially to the increase in illicit cultivation and abuse of cannabis in the United States. In addition, that development sends a wrong message to other countries. The Board welcomes the reaffirmation by the Government of the United States that cannabis continues to be considered a dangerous drug. The Government has also underscored that it is the responsibility of the Food and Drug Administration to approve all medicines in the United States. The Board notes with appreciation that the Government, following new guidelines on prosecution, which stipulate that activities should not focus on individuals who comply with "medical" cannabis regulations in states, has confirmed that it has no intention to legalize cannabis. The Board is concerned over the ongoing discussion in several states on legalizing and taxing the "recreational" use of cannabis, which would be a serious contravention of the 1961 Convention. The Board emphasizes that it is the responsibility of the Government of the United States to fully implement the provisions of the 1961 Convention with respect to all narcotic drugs, including cannabis (see paragraphs 61-64 above).

KABUL



Dr Wodak writes:

Dear All,

Methadone maintenance treatment started in Kabul yesterday morning

I have attached pictures of the first 2 patients receiving methadone

I am told that Rahim is a community leader.

NEW ZEALAND

Here is an interesting review Issues Paper on Drug Policy from the NZ Law Commission

Just released - Final version in a few months

It seems that they have struggled to comment honestly about drug policy while still producing a report that could be of use politically

<http://www.lawcom.govt.nz/ProjectIssuesPaper.aspx>

SINGAPORE

Not sure what the problem is in Singapore now?

The island famous for making an art form of 'Tough on Drugs' and its very own version of democracy

But its drug policy doesn't seem to be working:

Feb 3, 2010

[Heroin abuse on the rise](#)

By Jessica Lim

Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) officers nabbed 1,079 heroin abusers in 2009 – a 22 per cent jump from 2008. They made up almost 60 per cent of the total 1,876 drug abusers caught in 2009. -- ST PHOTO: STEPHANIE YEOW

HEROIN abuse in Singapore continues to rise for the fourth year running, even as the drug situation has improved.

Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) officers nabbed 1,079 heroin abusers in 2009 – a 22 per cent jump from 2008. They made up almost 60 per cent of the total 1,876 drug abusers caught in 2009, according to figures released by the CNB on Wednesday. In 2008, 46 per cent of the 1,925 drug abusers caught were heroin users.

Asked if the rise in heroin abusers was worrying, CNB deputy director Ng Ser Song said he was not 'unduly concerned'. 'It is not a huge jump, but we will keep an eye on it,' he said, adding that the rise was not unexpected.

Mr Ng explained that some former Subutex users would return to shooting heroine after the over-the-counter pill, which was introduced to wean them off their addiction, was banned in 2006 after rampant abuse.

Indeed, the number of subutex abusers arrested fell by 65 per cent in 2009 from a year ago, making up only 7 per cent of drug users here.

Mr Ng said another reason for the increase in heroin abuse is Singapore's proximity to the Golden Triangle, which has become an emerging heroin source. But the rise in heroin abuse is nowhere near the same levels in 1994 when almost 6,000 heroin abusers were arrested.

Overall, the number of drug abusers arrested across all age groups dropped,

except for a slight increase of 2 per cent in the 20 to 29 age group. Drug abusers aged 40 and above still formed the majority, at 44 per cent.

New drug abusers also went up slightly from 508 in 2008 to 544 last year.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



Dispatches from the Front Line...
by those who serve in the War on Drugs



From the Trenches to the Benches, Criminal Justice Professionals Call for an End to Prohibition

Invigorated by the 2009 International Drug Policy Reform Conference in November, LEAP's speakers and staff left Albuquerque ready take on major issues in drug policy reform.

In early December, a [significant victory](#) came as the US House and Senate agreed on the final details of the FY 2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act, which slashed funding for the drug czar's advertising budget to roughly one third the amount of the previous year. The same week, an Angus Reid Public Opinion Poll was released which found that two thirds of American adults believe the war on drugs is a failure. LEAP speakers are working hard to ensure that progress is made.

Canadian police officer **David Bratzer** was on tour in Hawaii, where drug policy reform [needed a push](#) in the right direction. Retired Detective Lieutenant and LEAP Executive Director **Jack Cole** recently returned from Denmark, where he presented to 125 people in Parliament, including Norwegian Members of Parliament. Jack also spoke to a station house of more than 100 police officers, where he received very positive feedback.

Superintendent for the Cheshire County, New Hampshire Department of Corrections **Richard Van Wickler** and Salem, New Hampshire Police Sergeant **John Tomassi** testified at a hearing for a bill that would reevaluate the state's approach to drug policy and consider alternatives. **Eric Sterling**, president of the Criminal Justice Policy Foundation and former counsel to the U.S. Judiciary Committee, [testified](#) for a marijuana decriminalization bill in Virginia, while **Judge Jim Gray** and retired U.S. Customs Agent **Jim Byron** testified in [California](#) and [Washington state](#), respectively.



The *New York Post* recently ran an article titled "Heroin for Dummies" on a guidebook New York City published for heroin users, offering information on how to prepare drugs carefully and prevent infection, as well as sections on HIV testing and the dangers of sharing needles. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene printed the Take Charge Take Care handbook in order to "promote public health and save lives," but the DEA referred to it as "a step-by-step instruction on how to inject a poison" and called it "disturbing." As LEAP speaker and former Seattle chief of police **Norm Stamper** [points out](#), what's disturbing is that the DEA would consider blocking a publication with the potential to save lives just to make a point of furthering their unattainable goal of a drug-free world. Harm reduction efforts should be supported, not maligned.



In January, LEAP announced the [Cops and Clergy Initiative](#), which will provide support for such efforts by speaking out against the prohibitionists' standard use of the law enforcement and representatives of the faith to thwart steps toward reform.

Cop Aims to Decriminalize Pot in Rhode Island
Jack Cole speaks to the *Wall Street Journal*

A retired police officer and the proprietor of an organic eatery make an odd couple when it comes to trying to overturn marijuana laws in this tiny state, but Jack Cole and Josh Miller are giving it their best shot.

Mr. Cole, 71 years old, is a veteran of decades with the New Jersey State Police, almost all with the drug squad. To continue reading, [click here](#).

LEAP Speakers Support California Legalization Initiative



Retired California Superior Court **Judge Jim Gray** testified for an informational hearing on marijuana legalization before the California Assembly's Public Safety Committee last October, and on January 12, the Committee [passed the bill](#) by a vote of 4-3. Although the bill did not pass the Health Committee, the historic vote marks the first time that a U.S. state legislative committee has approved a bill to tax and regulate marijuana. A new version of the bill is expected to be introduced in

February. While there may be a lengthy process ahead before legalization efforts come to fruition, LEAP speaker and former Oakland Prosecutor **James Anthony** is optimistic, telling San Francisco Weekly, "The takeaway is that elected politicians are finally catching up with their constituents, and even if they don't, the voters likely will."

Separately, marijuana legalization advocates announced that enough signatures had been collected to virtually ensure that the [legalization, regulation and taxation of marijuana](#) will appear on the November 2010 ballot.



LEAP Testifies for Legalization in Washington

On January 13, LEAP speaker and retired US Customs Agent **Arnold "Jim" Byron** testified before the Washington State House of Representatives about marijuana legalization and decriminalization. To view Jim's testimony at the hearing and read his full written testimony, please [click](#)

[here](#).

LEAP speakers **Matt McCally**, a former Washington State probation officer, and **Norm Stamper**, former Seattle chief of police, [were featured](#) in the Seattle Times also making the case for legalization.



Mexico Brags About Killing a Drug Kingpin, But It Won't Be Long Before Someone Takes His Place
Neill Franklin, LEAP Board member, on *Alternet*

The Mexican government is hailing the death of an especially brutal and high-ranking drug cartel leader as "a resounding blow" in the nation's bloody battle against organized crime. Forty-seven-year-old Beltran Leyva had a \$2.1 million bounty placed on his head by

Mexican authorities. He was killed Wednesday, along with six bodyguards in a shootout that lasted 90 minutes in Cuernavaca, an hour south of Mexico City. Local television footage showed helicopters and military vehicles circling the site while hundreds of gunshots rang out. To continue reading, [click here](#).

Stand with El Paso in Opposing the Failed War on Drugs

The city of El Paso, Texas is severely affected by drug war violence in Mexico, and on February 9, the El Paso City Council took a stand, saying it is time to re-examine failed drug policies that fund the murderous drug cartels that wreak so much havoc just over the border in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Please stand with El Paso in calling for an end to the war on drugs by [signing LEAP's petition](#) calling for much-needed and long-overdue change.

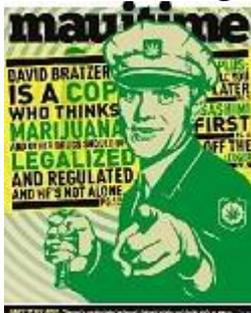
Howard Zinn, 1922 - 2010



Howard Zinn, historian and activist, whose book, "A People's History of the United States," was made into a movie narrated by many of Hollywood's biggest stars, died at age 87 on January 27.

On February 21, 2008, Jack Cole took the liberty of sending Howard a five page email explaining LEAP's position on the war on drugs. Six minutes later, he received an email response saying, "OK, Jack you can list me as a member." In so doing, he joined intellectual luminaries such as Noam Chomsky and Milton Friedman who understood, from quite different frameworks, the futility and corrupting barbarity of this war.

David Bratzer and Law Enforcement Against Prohibition Have Fought in the Trenches of the War on Drugs and Want to End It



[Maui Time Weekly speaks to David Bratzer](#)

If you really want to know about a war, ask the soldiers on the ground. In the case of the four-decades-old War on Drugs, those soldiers would be the police officers charged with busting dealers and users. And, though they may not represent a majority within their profession, some cops are beginning to break ranks, to publicly question the wisdom and effectiveness of drug prohibition.

Take David Bratzer, a Canadian police officer and a member of Law Enforcement Against Prohibition [LEAP], an international nonprofit organization made up of current and former law enforcement officials who support the legalization and regulation of marijuana and other drugs. We asked Bratzer-who was recently on Maui-to talk about LEAP, legalization and what the drug war looks like from the trenches. To continue reading, [click here](#).

Here is a very well written, accessible Rolling Stone article from December 2007: [How America Lost the War on Drugs](#)

Just over 2 years later, the conclusions seem even more certain

Slowly, Limits On Pot Are Fading

USA Today speaks to **Judge Jim Gray** in a front-page feature article

James Gray once saw himself as a drug warrior, a former federal prosecutor and county judge who sent people to prison for dealing pot and other drug offenses. Gradually, though, he became convinced that the ban on marijuana was making it

more accessible to young people, not less.

"I ask kids all the time, and they'll tell you it is easier to get marijuana than a six-pack of beer because that is controlled by the government," he said, noting that drug dealers don't ask for IDs or honor minimum age requirements.

So Gray -- who spent two decades as a superior court judge in Orange County, Calif., and once ran for Congress as a Republican -- switched sides in the war on drugs, becoming an advocate for legalizing marijuana.

To continue reading the article on Judge Jim Gray, please [click here](#).

Fighting a Losing Battle

Peter Christ in *The Leader-Herald*

After 20 years in law enforcement, Peter Christ is familiar with the war on drugs. Christ said as a police officer, drug arrests were the only arrests that made no difference to his community. When the media speaks of drug-related violence, he said, what's really happening is money-related violence. Eliminate one kingpin of the drug trade in a certain area and violence escalates until a new one is found, he said.

"It's a failed policy," he said. "You arrest one, but the market is so big and there's so much money there that their spot gets filled quick."

Christ pointed out that even prisons are not drug-free. He said the war on drugs is simply another word for prohibition, and because of free choice, prohibition simply does not work.

"If people want to do something, they're going to find a way to do it," he said. "If we can't even keep drugs out of prison, how can we keep them out of a free society?"

To read the complete article on Peter Christ, please [click here](#).

The Fake Weed Fight

The American Prospect speaks to **Norm Stamper**



The Prospect asked LEAP member and former Seattle police chief Norm Stamper a few questions about liberalizing drug policy, K2, and what fake pot suggests about a misguided war on drugs.

When people think about police chiefs, liberalization of drug policy is probably not the first thing that jumps to mind. So why are you against drug prohibition, and what prompted you to join LEAP?

My first epiphany was back when I was a rookie beat cop back in San Diego. I had arrested a 19-year-old, a young man who was in possession of marijuana, not a saleable amount, in his own home. But given the circumstances, I kicked in his door, I chased him to his toilet, I scooped up a handful of soggy seeds and stems and a few leaves. And I took him to jail.

On the way to jail, he's sitting in the backseat, and I'm thinking, "My God, I could be doing real police work." And it kind of hit me like a ton of bricks. I'm going to spend a couple hours, minimum, writing case reports, an arrest report, impounding the

pot, and booking him into jail. . .

To continue reading Norm Stamper's interview, please [click here](#).

Colorado In The News

DrugSense FOCUS Alert #432 - Friday, 12 February 2010

While not yet rivalling the medical cannabis dispensary news from California there has been a substantial increase in medical marijuana news from Colorado.

On December 28, 2000 the Constitution of Colorado was amended to include medical marijuana. That makes Colorado different than other states where laws were passed by initiative or the state legislature.

Read Section 14 of the Colorado Constitution at <http://mapinc.org/url/NU0HpB5k>

Please note that for magazines, with very rare exceptions, the cover date or Pubdate is the date that the magazine is removed from sale.

Now and in the future [news clippings specific to Colorado appear here](#), [dispensary items here](#), and [United Stated medicinal cannabis items here](#). Many of the news clippings may be worthy targets for your letters to the editor.

CANADA

Here is an article from a well respected Canadian newspaper [regarding the Harper government's decision to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada a decision from a lower court regarding the government of British Columbia's support for a Medically Supervised Injecting Centre in Vancouver \(called Insite\)](#). Ottawa has lost on this matter twice in lower courts.

DENMARK

First free heroin clinic opens in Denmark

(AFP) * 3.49PM 25TH February 2010

COPENHAGEN * After years of contention, Denmark on Monday opened its first clinic equipped to distribute free heroin under medical supervision to people heavily addicted to the drug.

The Scandinavian country joins a number of countries like Switzerland, the Netherlands and Germany to allow prescriptions for medicinal heroin, or diamorphine, to be written out to a small group of addicts so hooked on the substance that more traditional substitutes like methadone have no effect.

The clinic is set to serve only 120 of some 300 hard-core heroin addicts, or only about one percent of all drug addicts in the country.

"Our objective is not to cure heroin addicts, but to help those who are not satisfied by methadone by providing them with clean heroin, allowing them to avoid disease and the temptation of criminal acts to obtain the drug," a doctor and head of the clinic Inger Nielsen told AFP.

Only addicts who have been referred from a methadone centre for treatment and who voluntarily request to enter the clinic will be permitted to participate in the programme, Nielsen said.

They will be treated with methadone for the first 14 days "so we can determine how much heroin to prescribe," she added.

The Danish parliament passed a law legalising the distribution of medicinal heroin in 2008, but the opening of the clinic was delayed until the city of Copenhagen agreed to house the programme.

The User Association, a group representing drug addicts, remains critical, blasting that patients are required to go to the clinic twice a day, seven days a week, to receive their doses.

"This means living like a zombie, without being able to hold down a job or study or have hobbies," head of the association Joergen Kjaer told reporters.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN THE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR DRUG LAW REFORM (APGDLR)?

If you would like to add your name to the other Members of Australian Parliaments who have joined the Australian Parliamentary Group for Drug Law Reform please let us know. There is no cost involved.

Just let Dalma Dixon know either by telephone on 02 6277 2115 or by email dalma.dixon@aph.gov.au Please let her know of your Federal/State/Territory Parliament and your email address. We can speak with a stronger voice if we have more affiliated members of our Group.

Dr Mal Washer MP (02 6277 2114) and Julia Irwin MP (02 6277 4300) Parliament House, Canberra – Co-Chairs, Australian Parliamentary Group for Drug Law Reform
