

The Truth for a Change Blog

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Gary Johnson to Drug Policy Alliance: Pardon non-violent marijuana offenses — and remove marijuana from schedule I of the controlled substances act

November 3, 2011 | Posted in [Blog](#), [Gov. Gary Johnson](#), [Issue](#), [Liberty](#), [Marijuana Legalization](#)

November 3, 2011, Los Angeles, CA — Citing [growing public support](#) for the legalization of marijuana and the costs of enforcing current marijuana laws, former New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson told a conference of the Drug Policy Alliance (DPA) Thursday that, as President, he would act immediately to remove cannabis from the classification under the Controlled Substances Act which makes it illegal under federal law. Johnson also pledged to expedite pardons for those convicted of non-violent marijuana offenses.

Speaking to the DPA in Los Angeles Thursday morning, Johnson said, "Polls show that at least half the American people today have come to the same conclusion I came to as Governor of New Mexico: That the prohibition of marijuana in this country makes no more sense than the last Prohibition did. Alcohol Prohibition in the last century accomplished nothing but the creation of Al Capone and amazing profits for organized crime. Today's continuing prohibition of marijuana is accomplishing nothing but amazing profits for the cartels who are killing people by the thousands along our southern border.

"The President and the Attorney General have it within their power to end this madness by removing cannabis from Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act and allowing it to be treated like alcohol and tobacco. President Obama has said a lot lately about having to bypass Congress to accomplish his agenda. While I'm not enthused about most of what he is trying to do administratively, I would strongly suggest that reclassifying marijuana to reflect common sense is one executive action the President should take. And if elected, I would direct the Attorney General to immediately commence the process for removing marijuana from Schedule I of the CSA."

Johnson added, "Obviously, 'rescheduling' marijuana would not, with the stroke of a pen, undo 50 sets of state law. It would, however, remove the faulty justification for federal laws which make recreational and medicinal marijuana use criminal. I also recognize that some in Congress might very well try to 'recriminalize' marijuana if I changed its classification administratively. Whether they succeeded or not, at least we would finally have the debate we need to have.

"Each year, 700,000 people are arrested for marijuana possession. Those are 700,000 people who now have a record, for whose prosecution we have paid, and whose cases are clogging up our courts and law enforcement agencies — for no logical reason. Since 1970, almost 20 million Americans have been arrested for marijuana offenses, with the vast majority arrested for simple possession.

"After several decades, can anyone honestly say that our country is a better place as a result of having labeled those 20 million people as criminals?"

Johnson also repeated that, as President, he would establish a process for expediting pardons for those hundreds of thousands of Americans who have been convicted under federal law for nonviolent marijuana offenses, saying, "As President I believe pardoning those convicted under federal law

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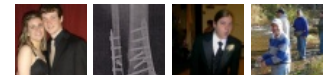
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Gary Johnson



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This Thursday I will be addressing John Hopkins University in DC. Tune in live on <http://t.co/cRwVnxhN> via @Yowie: <http://t.co/BZu5nRaV> about 3 hours ago

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Johnson Campaign Files @FECUpdates And @FCC Complaints Over CBS Debate Exclusion: <http://t.co/K6ii93W2> #gj2012 about 6 hours ago

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would encourage the governors of the fifty states to likewise make it possible for a lot of good people to erase the blot of marijuana offenses from their records for state offenses.”

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