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# LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF ILLINOIS

## CONGRESSMAN KIRK, IT WON'T WORK

U.S. Representative Mark Kirk (R-IL) announced this week legislation to stiffen criminal penalties on the distribution of a more potent type of marijuana. "Kush" is the common street name of this type of drug.

Kirk's proposed legislation, entitled the High-Potency Marijuana Sentencing Enforcement Act of 2009 (H.R. 2828) would increase federal fines and sentences for distributors of Kush. Sentences of 20 to 25 years, depending on the circumstance, as well as fines in the millions of dollars, are included in the proposed legislation.

"With all due respect to Congressman Kirk, he doesn't get it," said Dave Brady, State Chair of the Libertarian Party of Illinois. "We need to stop spending time and energy attempting to combat the use and distribution of drugs." "In a free country, whatever people choose to put into their own bodies is their own business, whether it's drugs, alcohol, tobacco, coffee or cheeseburgers. The job of government is to protect our freedom, not to act as our Big Brother," added Brady.

A recent *Wall Street Journal* article with the headline: "White House Czar Calls for End to War on Drugs" mentions that the Obama administration's new drug czar, Gil Kerlikowske, favors a shift toward treatment over incarceration to reduce drug use. Though the article indicates that Kerlikowske doesn't favor the legalization of drugs, it's a step in the right direction. If money is to be spent fighting drug use, why not use it to try to help someone instead of putting them in jail?

The horrendous situation in Mexico, with thousands of deaths in the past few years, as well as the amount of violence and number of murders in Chicago due to drug trafficking, indicate that banning drugs only puts more guns in the hands of criminals, and too often, innocent people get hurt or killed. There are far too many individuals in prison for either possession or distribution of drugs. The decades long "War on Drugs" has been a big waste of time and taxpayer money. Police should be devoting more of their time on crimes in which there is a victim.

An end to the drug war would result in an immediate drop in violence and a safer atmosphere in areas that need it the most.

*The Libertarian Party of Illinois is a political home for those who value honesty, fairness, respect, responsibility and compassion.*