

# DRUG ABUSE

## PREVENTION IS NO LONGER AN OPTION

*By Roger Morgan, Take Back America Campaign*

Drug abuse is a preventable disease, if we do what works to prevent it. And, prevent it we must, or accept our fate as a nation in decline. Addiction is a health problem, called a pediatric onset disease, because it almost always starts with kids. To prevent society's drug problem, we must take action to protect kids; to deter the onset of the disease until they reach adulthood and their bodies and brains are less vulnerable.

The annual economic cost of our neglect is over \$1 trillion, 600,000 deaths a year and over 23 million Americans enslaved by addiction to drugs or alcohol. Drugs and alcohol are the root cause of almost all of our social and economic problems. Observe:

- Law Enforcement – More crime and less resources to fight it. Over 80% of violent crimes are committed under the influence of drugs or alcohol; 70-87% of arrestees test positive for drugs. 66% of prisoners are addicts, 33% mentally ill. America has 5% of the world's population and consumes 66% of the world's illicit drugs. We house 25% of the world's prisoners. We have almost 1,000,000 gang members in America, many affiliated with the drug cartels. On average, addicts commit 100 crimes a year.
- Health Problems - According to CASA (Columbia University) substance abuse accounts for 72 major diseases requiring hospitalization, with a related cost of \$700 billion a year. Roughly 3,600 Americans die monthly of drug overdose, almost all of whom started their drug journey with marijuana. Marijuana, being fraudulently touted as medicine, is a major cause of brain damage, birth defects and addiction, aside from numerous other deleterious effects. Marijuana doesn't kill by overdose, but it is a gateway leading to the use of other drugs that do, such as heroin, which is on the rise nationally.
- Mental Illness - Drugs and alcohol are a major causal factor in psychosis. Marijuana use during adolescence can cause schizophrenia, paranoia, suicidal depression and PERMANENT brain damage. Mentally ill people in California jails and prisons has grown from 19-25% in 5 years. Since there aren't adequate beds for them in mental illness facilities, they often remain in jail for 3 to 6 months.
- Education - America has slipped to 24th in the world academically, and in decline. Nationally, one-third of students are high school drop outs. According to UC Santa Barbara research, the average cost of a high school drop out over their life span is \$386,000. Drugs and alcohol play a major role in truancy, violence, teen pregnancies sexually transmitted disease and traffic fatalities. Marijuana particularly impairs one's ability to absorb and retain knowledge, stifles motivation and retards the maturation process.
- Welfare – Addicts can't work, or work affectively, so they burden the welfare roles. As addiction further cripples their brains, many end up "permanently disabled" and thereafter become a burden until death on all aspects of public service. Unable to care for their offspring, over 6 million children end up being raised by grandparents or in foster homes.
- Traffic Safety – Drugs alone account for 37% of injury accidents. A 20 year study in New Zealand verified that smoking marijuana doubles the risk of an injury accident. A California study (Crancer) showed that traffic fatalities caused by marijuana impairment doubled from 2004 to 2009 owing to the proliferation of marijuana use.

In California, substance abuse absorbs 20% of the State budget. If we didn't have to spend \$16 - \$20 billion shoveling up the damage and treating the addicted, we would have more resources for schools, more teachers, less crime, more law enforcement, more firemen, et al, and maybe even a balanced budget without raising taxes. The answer is to prevent the problem where it starts, with kids ... average age 13.