

FULL-PAGE ADVERTISEMENT IN NEW YORK TIMES WELCOMES LEGALIZATION OF MARIJUANA: SAYS WAR ON DRUGS WAS IMPRUDENT



Last month, Colorado and Washington pioneered two pathbreaking legislations that made them the first political jurisdictions, not only in the United States of America, but across the world, to regulate marijuana legally. Both the states received strong approval for the initiatives and won voter confidence by significant margins. In appreciation for giving such a resounding and thumping endorsement to the legislation, the Drug Policy Alliance, America's foremost advocates of drug-reform have taken out a full-page advertisement in the New York Times to express their gratitude to voters in both the states. The ad says that after eight decades prohibition has finally ended. It goes on to say that the war on drugs was unfair and cost the exchequer a lot of money. On the contrary it would now be regulated and would even generate revenue through taxes whereas earlier it was costing the state a lot of money. The Drug Policy Alliance said that it is justifiably proud that its persistent efforts have borne fruit and are grateful to the people of Colorado and Washington that this historic day could dawn. The ad goes on to express its gratitude to various eminent politicians amongst them Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter and some Presidents of Latin America, who set the ball rolling, by breaking taboos. While cajoling people to join them in their crusade the ad, says that they aim for the day when drug policies are no longer mandated by lack of knowledge, trepidation and discrimination but rather by knowledge, empathy, monetary good sense and respect for human rights. Not only did the voters catapult Washington and Colorado into the pages of history, as two states who had the courage to see and face the truth and bite the bullet, it also made debate and discussion about forming a new drug policy, one of paramount and singular importance. The ad follows after President Obama speaking about the overwhelming manner in which the people had voted in favor of legalizing, had said that there would continue to be a clash between federal laws and state laws, but the use of marijuana in states that have given it official sanction should not be made a "top priority" for imposing federal laws. What has happened in Colorado and Washington was a sign of time to come. 2012 had becoming a cut-off point year for the escalating movement against the war on drugs to be brought to its logical conclusion. It had gathered steam, when from its earlier perception of being something advocated by the drug lobby, it had received endorsement from intellectuals and activists and the need for the drug policy to be analyzed properly was advanced by eminent elected officials within the country. New York's Andrew Cuomo and New Jersey's Chris Christie, both of whom are being touted as potential presidential candidates in 2016 have endorsed that there should be a restructuring of the drug policy. The former said that he was determined to stop the way arrests were made for using marijuana and said that the arrests were discriminatory and biased. The latter, actually went against his party's accepted policy and said that war against drug had failed and there needed to be a re-think. Evangelist Pat Robertson and earlier President Jimmy Carter, hardly a twosome on the same side of the coin, have endorsed legally regulating marijuana from this year onward and the most telling blow was provided by former President Bill Clinton, who speaking in a recently released documentary Breaking the Taboo, echoed the feelings of many other Presidents disapproving the war on drugs and emphasizing the need for change. The new legislation has opened new doors for others states and taken the war on drugs from the periphery to the broader horizons of national and international political affairs.

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