

Huffington Post

Momentum Builds to End Failed Drug War: 1,000 to Attend Upcoming Conference

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October 5, 2011

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tony-newman/momentum-builds-to-end-fa_b_996023.html

Every day we read and hear about the horrors of the failed drug war in newspapers and on TV. There is the tragic bloodbath in Mexico where more than 50,000 people have been [killed](#) since President Calderon launched his "surge" against the drug traffickers 5 years ago. We see our state and local governments struggling to pay teachers while our prisons are exploding with people with nonviolent drug offenses at a price tag of \$50,000 per person. We hear about the overdose crisis where more people are now dying from preventable overdoses than from car accidents. That's the bad news.

The good news is that there is a growing movement bubbling up across the country that will help us find an exit strategy to this unwinnable war. Do you want to feel the momentum for change and be a part of the solution? Join the more than 1,000 people from around the world who will come together in Los Angeles at the [International Drug Policy Reform conference](#) on November 2nd - 5th.

Our conference is made up of people who love drugs, people who hate drugs and people who don't care about drugs. There are people who enjoy marijuana or other drugs and don't consider themselves criminals just because they like to unwind with a joint instead of a cocktail. There are also people who have seen the horrors of drugs and addiction. Their substance abuse may have led to them going to jail or maybe they lost a loved one to an overdose. There are also people who have never tried illicit drugs, but are outraged at the money and lives wasted due to drug war. What unites all of these people is the belief the war on drugs causes more harm than good.

The movement to end the drug war is a very big tent that encompasses people across the political spectrum. Gavin Newsom, the former Democratic Mayor of San Francisco and current Lieutenant Governor of California, will share the stage with the libertarian former Governor of New Mexico Gary Johnson. Dozens of people who have spent years behind bars for a nonviolent drug offense will participate in conversations and panels with dozens of police officers who saw the futility of the drug war and are speaking out against drug prohibition. Students who are just beginning their activism will appear alongside veterans of the movement who have worked for decades against drug war hysteria.

You will spend three days sharing and learning from people who have won numerous legislative victories like passing laws for treatment instead of incarceration for drug offenders to medical marijuana for sick patients. You will spend time with movements leaders abroad, like [Javier Sicilia](#), the Mexican poet whose son is one of the 50,000 people killed over the last 5 years and

who is now leading a mass movement against the drug war that brings tens of thousands to the streets of Mexico.

As much as you will learn from the panel and seminars, you will learn at night hanging out with folks at the hotel bar or restaurant. You will meet people who pass out syringes to people who inject drugs on the streets of Chicago or talk to a Reverend from Tennessee who helps people in the community reenter society after a long time behind bars. The gathering allows you to meet people you have only communicated with on email or have only seen on TV.

For the first time at the Reform Conference, we are staging a mass public protest acknowledging President Nixon's declaration of the drug war 40 years ago this year, demanding health-centered alternatives and celebrating this incredible, diverse movement. ["No More Drug War: A Rally & Concert to End the War on Drugs"](#) is taking place Thursday, November 3rd at the Levitt Pavilion in historic MacArthur Park. The event will feature international reform leaders, live music, spoken word artists, and a host of gourmet food trucks. This will be the largest event of its kind ever!

It is obvious that the war on drugs has failed. We are building an alternative. It is time for us as a society to learn how to live with drugs, because they aren't going anywhere. Drugs have been around for thousands of years and will be here for thousands more. We need to educate people about the possible harms of drug use, offer compassion and treatment to people who have problems, and leave in peace the people who are not causing harm. And we need to take action against the incarceration of so many of our brothers and sisters who are suffering behind bars. We need you to join us in Los Angeles. If the people lead, the leaders will follow!

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