

News, Announcements and Information from

THE **NORML** NEWS

your National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws

Under New Management With Same Philosophy – WIN!

Allen St. Pierre Assumes Helm As New NORML Executive Director

Washington, DC (January 6, 2005): Allen St. Pierre officially took over this week as Executive Director of NORML, replacing NORML founder Keith Stroup, who headed the organization from 1970 to 1979, and again from 1995 to 2004. Stroup, 61, had announced last spring that he would be stepping down as head of NORML at the end of the year. He will remain on the NORML staff on a part time basis.

"Allen St. Pierre was the board's first, and only, choice to replace NORML's founder R. Keith Stroup," said Stephen Dillon, chairman of NORML's Board of Directors.

St. Pierre has served with the NORML organization since 1991, and was appointed
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Save This Date: NORML Announces 2005 National Conference In San Francisco

Washington, DC (January 6, 2005): NORML is pleased to announce that the 2005 National NORML Conference will take place March 31-April 2 at the Cathedral Hill Hotel in downtown San Francisco.

Featured speakers at this year's event will include new NORML Executive Director Allen St. Pierre, best selling travel author, television host and NORML Advisory Board member Rick Steves, Drug Policy Alliance Executive Director Ethan Nadelmann; as well as physicians, nurses and healthcare specialists, medical cannabis patients and activists, legal experts, hemp industry leaders, High Times Magazine's editors, cultivation experts, authors, members of NORML's board of directors and many others.

According <continued on page 3 >

Black Lawmakers Condemn War On Drugs, Call For Non-Criminal Alternatives

Philadelphia, PA (January 13, 2005): Anti-drug policies that rely on criminal penalties and incarceration are ineffective and disproportionately impact African Americans, according to a resolution passed by the [National Black Caucus of State Legislators](#) at their annual Legislative Conference.

The resolution states: "The war on drugs has failed. Every community in the US contends with the harmful effects of drug misuse and related problems, and while states have continually increased their expenditures to wage the war on drugs, policies which rely heavily on arrest and incarceration have proved costly and ineffective at addressing these issues." Lawmakers added, "The war on drugs is a <continued on page 4 >

**The NORML
News Report is an
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and broadcast news,
announcements and
information about the
National Organization
for the Reform of
Marijuana Laws and
cannabis in general.**

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A Voice for Responsible Marijuana Smokers

Since its founding in 1970, NORML has provided a voice in the public policy debate for those Americans who oppose marijuana prohibition and favor an end to the practice of arresting marijuana smokers. A nonprofit public-interest advocacy group, NORML represents the interests of the tens of millions of Americans who smoke marijuana responsibly.

During the 1970s, NORML led the successful efforts to decriminalize minor marijuana offenses in 11 states and significantly lower marijuana penalties in all others.

Today NORML continues to lead the fight to reform state and federal marijuana laws, whether by voter initiative or through the elected legislatures. NORML serves as an informational resource to the [national media](#) on marijuana-related stories, providing a perspective to offset the [anti-marijuana propaganda](#) from the government; lobbies state and federal legislators in support of reform legislation; publishes a regular [newsletter](#); hosts, along with the NORML Foundation, an informative web site and an [annual conference](#); and serves as the umbrella group for a national network of citizen-activists committed to ending marijuana prohibition and legalizing marijuana.

Their sister organization, [the NORML Foundation](#) sponsors public advertising campaigns to better educate the public about marijuana and alternatives to current marijuana policy; provides legal assistance and support to victims of the current laws; and undertakes relevant research.

The oldest and largest marijuana legalization organization in the country, NORML maintains a professional staff in Washington, DC, and a network of volunteer state and local [NORML Chapters](#) across the country. Check 'em out!

**NORML's mission is to move public opinion sufficiently to
achieve the repeal of marijuana prohibition so that the
responsible use of cannabis by adults is no longer subject to
penalty.**

When marijuana is enjoyed responsibly, subjecting users to harsh criminal and civil penalties provides no public benefit and causes terrible injustices. For reasons of public safety, public health, economics and justice, the prohibition laws should be repealed to the extent that they criminalize responsible marijuana use.

NORML supports the right of adults to use marijuana responsibly, whether for [medical](#) or [personal](#) purposes. All penalties, both civil and criminal, should be eliminated for responsible use. NORML also supports the legalization of [hemp](#) (non-psychoactive marijuana) for industrial use. **To find out more, like how you can help, call, write or visit their website. You'll be glad you did!**

<continued from NEW DIRECTOR, page 1 > Executive Director of the NORML Foundation in 1997.

"Frankly speaking, there simply would be no NORML today without Allen's presence and dedication to the organization and the marijuana law reform movement," Dillon said. "Allen's forgotten more about marijuana and marijuana policy than most scholars will ever know about the subject matter. Allen has traveled the United States, Canada and Europe effectively and passionately advocating for marijuana law reform and has faithfully and professionally represented NORML, marijuana consumers and marijuana law reform, over 4,000 times in the major media since 1991."

Stroup added: "Allen has been with NORML for 14 years, serving as the number two person for much of that time. He is a dedicated, hard working, bright and committed individual who has earned the right to take his turn at the helm. I have depended on Allen for much of the work we have accomplished during my second term at NORML, and I am confident his energy and new ideas will provide a needed boost to the organization."

St. Pierre began his tenure as Executive Director by calling on feedback from NORML's membership, and laying out plans to broaden the organization's base by reaching out to ethnic minorities disproportionately impacted by marijuana prohibition, and by initiating a series of small, regional advertising campaigns.

"Input from NORML's supporters is crucial for the national office's staff, NORML's 115 chapters, the 350 lawyers who comprise NORML's National Legal Committee and me to effectively represent the interests of cannabis consumers and the general public," St. Pierre said. He added that the organization is releasing soon a series of comprehensive reports analyzing the social and economic ramifications of marijuana law enforcement in all of the counties in all 50 states.

For more information or to schedule a media interview, please contact: media@norml.org

<continued from NORML CONFERENCE, page 1 > to NORML's new executive director Allen St.

Pierre, "This year's conference marks NORML's return to the Bay area, which was host to NORML's highly successful 2002 and 2003 annual gatherings, and will offer attendees a unique opportunity to network with other marijuana law reformers."

"This year's reduced hotel room rate, coupled with free parking for hotel patrons in one of the most 'cannabis-friendly' cities in America sounds like a prescription to me for fun and education. If a person is serious about changing America's misguided cannabis laws, the annual NORML conference is the gathering place for medical cannabis patients, cannabis consumers and concerned citizens."

Lodging at the Cathedral Hill Hotel for conference attendees is available at a specially reduced rate by calling 1-800-622-0855 or by visiting www.cathedralhillhotel.com and referring to the code 'NORML'. *Complete conference information - including a full listing of speakers, panel discussions, and after-hour events - is available on the [NORML website](http://www.norml.org) at: www.norml.org*

US Stands Alone In Hemp Ban, Congressional Research Service Report Says

Washington, DC (January 13, 2005): The United States is the only developed nation that fails to cultivate industrial hemp as an economic crop, according to Congressional Resource Service (CRS) report published last week. Hemp is a distinct variety of the plant species cannabis sativa that contains only minute (less than 1%) amounts of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the primary psychoactive ingredient in marijuana. Farmers worldwide grow hemp commercially for fiber, seed, and oil for use in a variety of industrial and consumer products, including food.

"In all, more than 30 countries in Europe, Asia, and North America grow hemp," the report states, adding that the European Union instituted a subsidy program in the 1990s for

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"The United States is the only developed nation in which industrial hemp is not an established crop."

Federal law makes no distinctions between cannabis and industrial hemp, and makes it illegal to grow hemp without a license from the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). According to the CRS, "The DEA has been unwilling to grant licenses for growing small plots of hemp for research purposes," even when such research is authorized by state law, because the agency believes that doing so would "send the wrong message to the American public concerning the government's position on drugs." As an example, the report notes that the DEA "has still not ruled on an application submitted in 1999 by a North Dakota researcher" to grow a trial plot of hemp in compliance with state law. More than a [dozen states](#) have enacted laws authorizing the licensed cultivation of hemp for research purposes.

"The federal ban on hemp cultivation and production is a direct outgrowth of the government's absurd war on cannabis," NORML Executive Director Allen St. Pierre said. "This report should help to galvanize support among US farmers, industrialists, and environmentalists for the legalization and regulation of hemp as an agricultural commodity."

For more information, please contact either [Allen St. Pierre](#) or [Paul Armentano](#) of NORML at (202) 483-5500. The CRS report, entitled "Hemp as an Agricultural Commodity," is available online at:

<http://www.fas.org/sqp/crs/RL32725.pdf>

<continued from BLACK LAWMAKERS, page 1 > major force driving the incarceration of over 2.1 million people in the United States, with African Americans disproportionately represented in our country's overflowing jails and prisons and the war on drugs perpetuates mandatory

minimums, felony disfranchisement, disproportionate over-incarceration, poor access to health care, under funded public education, widespread unemployment, and the general criminalization of communities of color in the US."

Lawmakers said that they intend to advance drug policies that prioritize public health rather than criminal penalties, and announced the creation of a task force "to research and report on the allocation of state expenditures for all public education and health services and the war on drugs so that states can understand the real cost of the war on drugs in the state budgets and in their communities."

For more information, please contact [Allen St. Pierre](#), NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500.

Drug Czar's "News" Stories Violated Feds' Anti-Propaganda Laws, General Accounting Office Finds

Washington, DC (January 13, 2005): Taxpayer-funded video "news" stories prepared by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to simulate private newscasts constitute "covert propaganda" and are in violation of federal anti-propaganda laws, according to the findings of an investigation by the General Accounting Office (GAO).

The videos, which were distributed to approximately 770 news stations nationwide between the years 2002 and 2004, were designed "to be indistinguishable from news stories produced by private sector television news organizations," the GAO found. "ONDCP did this so they could be seamlessly incorporated into private sector television news broadcasts without alteration. ... ONDCP did not identify itself to the viewing audience ... [and] made it impossible for the targeted viewing audience to ascertain that these stories were produced by the government, and not by the news organization broadcasting them." <continued on next page>

<continued from previous page> Nearly 300 stations broadcasted the ONDCP's prepackaged reports, which were seen by some 22 million households. The agency spent more than \$150,000 in taxpayer funds to produce and distribute the videos, which were paid for as part of the [White House's National Drug Free Media Campaign](#). The Campaign, which began in 1998, spends approximately \$150 million annually to produce and purchase public service announcements warning about the alleged dangers of marijuana, among other anti-drug themes. However, a series of federally [funded reviews](#) of the program found that teens who were most exposed to the Campaign's ads tended to "move more markedly in a 'pro-drug' direction as they aged than those who were exposed to less."

Previously, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) had [sanctioned](#) organizers of the Campaign for sponsoring advertisements and television content without identifying the ONDCP as the paid sponsor of the programming, in violation of federal anti-payola laws.

"When an entity, particularly the federal government, purchases on-air time to persuade the public audience, the public has a legal right under the law to know that they are hearing or viewing content which has been paid for, and they also have a legal right to know who has paid for it," NORML Executive Director Allen St. Pierre said. "Just because that content is sponsored by the Drug Czar's office under the guise of fighting the 'war on drugs' does not give them permission to flout federal law."

For more information, please contact either [Allen St. Pierre](#) or [Paul Armentano](#) of NORML at (202) 483-5500. The GAO's report is available online at:

<http://www.gao.gov/decisions/appro/303495.htm>

Polish Government Considers Pot Decriminalization

Warsaw, Poland (January 20, 2005): The Polish Parliament is considering legislation proposed

by the Ministry of Health that seeks to decriminalize the personal use of cannabis and other controlled substances.

Stating his support for the law change, Health Minister Marek Balicki said: "We still have the illusion that if we have criminal punishment for illicit drugs possession, then we will solve the drug problem. Making criminals from young people that have tried drugs is without sense. This is not a good road."

In recent years, several European and Eastern European nations - including the United Kingdom, Russia, Belgium, Croatia and Portugal - have liberalized and/or decriminalized the possession and use of cannabis.

For a summary of European cannabis laws, please visit:

http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=5445

Cannabis Extracts Reduce Cancer Pain, Study Says

Salisbury, United Kingdom (January 20, 2005): Medicinal cannabis extracts significantly reduce pain in cancer patients compared to placebo, according to the results of clinical trial data announced this week by Britain's [GW Pharmaceuticals](#).

One hundred and seventy-seven patients with advanced cancer participated in the double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial. Patients in the trial suffered from chronic pain and were unresponsive to standard analgesic therapies. Volunteers were administered either [Sativex](#) (an oral spray containing precise doses of the cannabinoids THC and CBD), a THC-only extract, or placebo. All of the patients in the study remained on their existing analgesic medications during the trial.

"Sativex achieved a statistically significant improvement in comparison to placebo in pain," the company announced in a prepared statement. "A responder analysis showed that approximately 40 percent of patients on Sativex showed <continued next page>

<continued from previous page> greater than 30 percent improvement in their pain."

Patients administered extracts containing primarily THC did not experience a significant alleviation in pain.

Commenting on the results of the study, GW Pharmaceuticals spokesperson Stephen Wright said: "Patients in this trial were suffering intense pain as a result of their cancer despite using currently available strong opioid treatments and therefore have a very high clinical need. The data from this important trial further demonstrates the broad potential of Sativex, not only in its initial Multiple Sclerosis and neuropathic pain markets, but also in cancer and potentially other types of chronic pain. These positive results suggest that Sativex may represent a valuable new treatment option for this group of patients."

In December, Health Canada issued a "Qualifying Notice" for the [approval](#) of Sativex for the treatment of neuropathic pain associated with Multiple Sclerosis. However, British regulatory approval for the drug was delayed after an advisory body of the British Medicines and Health products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) [announced](#) late last year that it required further clinical evidence of Sativex's ability to alleviate MS-associated spasticity in a "clinically relevant" manner.

The company is also initiating plans to seek regulatory approval for the prescription use of Sativex in the United States, Reuters News Service reported.

For more information, please contact [Allen St. Pierre](#) or [Paul Armentano](#) of NORML at (202) 483-5500 or visit: <http://www.gwpharm.com>

Zero Tolerant "Drugged Driving" Limits Unconstitutional, German Supreme Court Says

Berlin, Germany (January 20, 2005): A national law that defined motorists with any detectable level of drugs or marijuana (THC) in their blood as impaired per se has been struck down by the German Supreme Court.

The Court determined that the prosecution of persons who test positive for trace levels of drugs, but are not otherwise impaired, was not the legislative intent of the law. However, the Court did not clarify the law to establish set guidelines at which drivers who test positive for drugs in the blood can be considered legally impaired.

Similar "zero tolerance" [drugged driving laws](#) classifying motorists who test positive for any amount of illicit drugs or drug metabolites (non-psychoactive compounds produced from the chemical changes of a drug in the body) in their bodily fluids (blood, saliva, sweat and/or urine) as criminally impaired have been enacted in eleven US states: Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, and Wisconsin.

Though no scientific consensus yet exists specifying per se impairment levels for marijuana, drivers with THC levels in their blood below 5ng/ml are not associated with elevated risks of having a traffic accident in culpability surveys.

Speaking last August at the 17th International Conference on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety (ICADTS) in Glasgow, Scotland, presenters from an international working panel of physicians, forensic toxicologists and traffic scientists, led by Drs. Franjo Grotenhermen of Germany's nova-Institut and Gunter Berghaus of the University of Cologne, said:

"Commonly consumed doses of THC may cause maximum psychomotor impairment in some behavioral areas comparable to that equivalent to a BAC of above 0.08 percent. ... [However,] relevant acute effects typically subside within 3-4 hours after smoking. ... According to culpability studies, THC levels in blood serum below 5 ng/ml were not associated with an elevated accident risk. Even a THC serum level of between 5 and 10 ng/ml may not be associated with an above normal accident risk. [Therefore,] unless they are under the acute influence of the drug, both frequent and infrequent users of cannabis do not seem to have a higher accident <continued next page>

<continued from previous page> risk than non-users."

For more information, please contact either [Allen St. Pierre](#) or [Paul Armentano](#) of NORML at (202) 483-5500. For a summary of European DUID laws, please visit:

<http://eldd.emcdda.eu.int/databases/eldd comparative analyses.cfm>

the review, stating: "Marijuana is not a harmless substance, though its scientifically acknowledged harms are quite minimal compared to other legally regulated intoxicants, including alcohol and tobacco. By far the greatest danger to health posed by the responsible use of cannabis in the United States today stems from a criminal arrest or conviction."

For more information, please contact [Allen St. Pierre](#), NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500.

Moderate Use Of Cannabis "Safe," Study Says

Oxford, United Kingdom (January 27, 2005): Moderate cannabis use, even long-term, is "relatively safe" when compared to the health effects of other recreational intoxicants, according to a scientific review published in the February issue of the journal *Current Opinion in Pharmacology*.

"A review of the literature suggests that the majority of cannabis users, who use the drug occasionally rather than on a daily basis, will not suffer any lasting physical or mental harm," writes the study's author, Dr. Leslie Iversen of the University of Oxford. "Overall, by comparison with other drugs used mainly for 'recreational' purposes, cannabis could be rated to be a relatively safe drug."

The author concludes that there is little evidence that long-term cannabis use causes permanent cognitive impairment or has an adverse effect on global intelligence. Iversen does acknowledge, however, that smoking marijuana long-term may cause "the possibility of damage to the airways," though he admits that "little progress has been made in quantifying such risks." The author also notes that various longitudinal studies have found an association between the long-term, heavy use of cannabis and specific adverse psychosocial features, including lower educational achievement, though he acknowledges that there exists no "clear cause and effect relationship to explain the psychosocial associations."

NORML Executive Director Allen St. Pierre praised

Supreme Court Rules Random Drug Dog Sniffs Constitutional

Washington, DC (January 27, 2005): A police officer's use of a drug dog to sniff for the presence of illicit drugs during a lawful traffic stop is constitutionally permissible, even if there are no specific or articulable facts to suggest drug activity, according to a 6-2 ruling by the US Supreme Court on Monday.

The ruling reverses an Illinois Supreme Court decision that held that the use of a drug dog during a traffic stop without articulable suspicion of drug activity violates Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable searches by the state.

The case before the court involved Roy Cabelles, who was pulled over on an Illinois highway for driving six miles above the posted speed limit. During the course of the traffic stop, a second police officer from the state's Drug Interdiction Team arrived and proceeded to walk a drug-sniffing dog around Cabelles' car. The drug dog alerted officers to the trunk of Cabelles' car. Police subsequently searched the trunk and found marijuana.

"A dog sniff conducted during a concededly lawful traffic stop that reveals no information other than the location of a substance that no individual has any right to possess does not violate the Fourth Amendment," Justice John Paul Stevens wrote for the majority. He added: "Official conduct that does not 'compromise any legitimate interest of privacy' is not a search to the Fourth <continued next page>



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<continued from previous page> Amendment. We have held that any interest in possessing contraband cannot be deemed 'legitimate,' and thus, governmental conduct that only reveals the possession of contraband 'comprises no legitimate privacy interest.'"

Had the drug sniff unreasonably prolonged Cabelles' traffic stop, Stevens opined that he would have likely held the conduct to have been unlawful. Justices David Souter and Ruth Bader Ginsburg each issued separate dissenting opinions.

Justice Souter wrote that the use of a drug dog constitutes a limited search because dogs are fallible and may routinely alert police officers to conduct searches of private property where no contraband is present. "The infallible drug dog ... is a creature of legal fiction," he wrote. "[I]n practice the government's use of a trained narcotics dog functions as a limited search to reveal undisclosed facts about private enclosures, to be used to justify a further and complete search of the enclosed area. ... Since the police had no indication of illegal activity beyond the speed of the car in this case, the sniff search should be held unreasonable under the Fourth Amendment and its fruits should be suppressed."

Justice Ginsburg opined that the use of a drug sniffing dog absent of any specific suspicions of drug trafficking is unconstitutional because it's unrelated to the circumstances which justified the initial police contact. "The sniff surely broadened the scope of the traffic-violation-related seizure," she wrote. "Today's decision ... clears the way for suspicionless, dog-accompanied drug sweeps of parked cars along sidewalks and in parking lots."

The Supreme Court's decision in the case, Illinois v. Caballes, is available online at:

<http://www.supremecourtus.gov/opinions/04sli/popinion.html>

Justice Department Won't Defend Congress' Ban On Transit Ads Promoting Marijuana Law Reform

Washington, DC (January 27, 2005): The US Department of Justice announced this week that it will not appeal a 2004 US District Court ruling striking down a Congressional ban on the display of pro-drug law reform advertisements in public transit systems. The 2004 ruling held that the [law](#), which sought to withhold federal funds from any transit agency that "is involved directly or indirectly in any activity ... that promotes the legalization or medical use" of marijuana or other drugs, unconstitutionally infringes upon free speech.

US Solicitor General Paul Clement wrote in a letter to Congress, "The government does not have a viable argument to advance in the statute's defense and will not appeal the district court's decision holding the provision as currently drafted [is] unconstitutional."

NORML Executive Director Allen St. Pierre said the Justice Department acted reasonably in refusing to defend the ban, but rebuked "those in Congress who supported such a blatantly unconstitutional law in their zeal to stifle any legitimate debate regarding America's misguided drug policies."

For more information, contact [Allen St. Pierre](#), NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500.

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