Pipe Dream

March 13, 2009 By David Weiss

If you haven't already read the article, California Democratic state assemblyman Tom Ammiano introduced legislation last month that would legalize pot and allow the state to regulate and tax its sale -- a move that could mean billions of dollars for the cash-strapped state. Pot is, after all, California's biggest cash crop, responsible for $14 billion a year in sales, dwarfing the state's second largest agricultural commodity -- milk and cream -- which brings in $7.3 billion a year, according to the most recent USDA statistics. The state's tax collectors estimate the bill would bring in about $1.3 billion a year in much needed revenue, offsetting some of the billions of dollars in service cuts and spending reductions outlined in the recently approved state budget.

(Click here to read the rest of the article at Time.com)

They should have legalized and taxed it twenty years ago. Unfortunately, I'm sure the liquor lobby will do everything that they can to prevent decriminalization, so unless Obama decides to lead a Stoner initiative (and I can just just picture the speech he'll give to Congress: "Those opposed to decriminalization will say that America's future will go up in smoke. I say that it's high time for a change"), it 'aint gonna happen.

That's a shame. Regardless of whether or not marihuana might generate tax revenue, we *should* decriminalize it.

I've been a criminal defense lawyer in the New York State and Federal courts for almost twenty-five years. I've witnessed the destruction that criminalization of pot has brought. The U.S. now has more men and women in prison than any nation on Earth.

I've heard all of the arguments against decriminalization, and none of them are convincing. Grass has never been a "gateway" drug anymore than alcohol is, and I'd rather be sitting next to someone high on Humboldt County homegrown than some wild turkey wasted on Wild Turkey.

It really is time for a change...

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.