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THURSDAY, AUGUST 04, 2005

**The War On Drugs Goes To Pot**

by Michael in New York on [8/04/2005 06:18:00 PM](#)

**Rolling Stone has a fine rundown of the ludicrous war on drugs** -- ludicrous because Bush is focusing all his energies on throwing people with a joint into jail while failing to tackle the scourge of hard drugs that have exploded on his watch, like the abuse of meth.

Since 1992, according to a recent analysis of federal crime statistics by the Sentencing Project, arrests for marijuana have soared from 300,000 a year to 700,000. The **government spends an estimated \$4 billion a year arresting and prosecuting marijuana crimes -- more than it spends on treating addiction for all drugs --** and more and more of those busts are for possession rather than dealing. **One in four people currently in state prisons for pot offenses are classified as "low-level offenders."**

In New York, arrests for possession -- which now account for nine of every ten busts -- are up twenty-five-fold during the past decade. In Memphis, marijuana arrests are up nineteenfold, and large spikes have also been recorded in Philadelphia, Las Vegas and Houston....

**The war on pot diverts money and manpower from fighting far more harmful drugs.** While the feds target pot smokers, **a burgeoning meth epidemic is swamping rural communities, especially in the West and the Great Plains.** Nearly half of state and local law-enforcement agencies identify meth as their greatest drug threat -- compared with only one in eight for marijuana -- and more than 1 million Americans use the highly addictive drug, which is linked to violent crime, explosions and fires at meth labs, severe health problems, and child and family abuse.

In 2003, drug agents busted a staggering 10,182 meth labs, and **the fight against meth is straining the resources of local police and sheriffs in small towns. But the White House has proposed slashing federal aid for rural narcotics teams by half. "If those cuts go through, they're going to totally wipe us out," says Lt. Steve Dalton, leader of a drug task force in southwest Missouri.**

Hey, if you get stoned every night, you are going to do serious damage to your body. Getting drunk every night is also a really bad, unhealthy (and pathetic) thing to do. But I'd rather see the government focus on busting violent criminals and the violent hard drugs linked to them and leave alcohol and marijuana abuse to health officials. And busting people who use marijuana because it relieves some of the pain of chemo is just sick.



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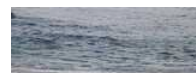
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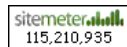
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