



ILCAAAP

Illinois Church Action on Alcohol & Addiction Problems

October 29, 2015

Marijuana Alert Myths of incarceration for drug possession



The *Wall Street Journal* published a well written op-ed by Heather McDonald from the Manhattan Institute, saying "**mass incarceration isn't the problem, rising crime is.**"

... **the state-prison population (which accounts for 87% of the nation's prisoners) is dominated by violent criminals and serial thieves.** In 2013 drug offenders made up less than 16% of the state-prison population; violent felons were 54% and property offenders 19%.

... In federal prisons-which hold only 13% of the nation's prisoners-drug offenders make up half of the inmate population. But these **offenders aren't casual drug users; overwhelmingly, they are serious traffickers. Fewer than 1% of drug offenders sentenced in federal court in 2014 were convicted of simple drug possession,** according to the U.S. Sentencing Commission. **Most of those possession convictions were plea-bargained down from trafficking charges.**

Another myth promoted by the deincarceration movement is that blacks are disproportionately targeted by federal drug prosecutions. The numbers tell a different story: Hispanics made up 48% of drug offenders sentenced in federal court in 2013; blacks were 27%, and whites 22%.

Even on the state level, drug-possession convicts are rare. In 2013 only 3.6% of state prisoners were serving time for drug possession-again, often the result of a plea bargain on more serious charges-compared with 12% of prisoners convicted of trafficking. **Virtually all the possession offenders had long prior arrest and conviction records.** [Read more](#)

East Peoria man growing 100 marijuana plants avoids prison

He pleaded guilty to possessing more than 2,000 grams of marijuana with intent to deliver, punishable by up to 15 years in prison. **Charges of growing more than 50 marijuana plants and possessing a controlled substance were dismissed in the plea agreement.** Butler was sentenced to 18 months in prison in 2007 for a felony marijuana conviction. [Read more](#)

Marijuana use doubles, so does addiction, study says

Published in JAMA Psychiatry, the report states that nearly 10 percent of adults across the country

inhaled or ingested marijuana in 2013. That compares with 4 percent in 2001.

The percentage of people reporting dependence or abuse of marijuana also doubled, from 1.5 percent in 2001 to nearly 3 percent in 2013. **Among users, the report found that three out of every 10 people or nearly 7 million Americans have an abuse or addiction problem.** [Read more](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

Share this Alert with your [State Representative](#) and [State Senator](#) and them to **oppose** the decriminalization of marijuana.

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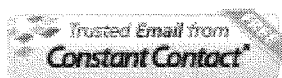
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