



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

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Contact: Clarkson Hine
(202) 224-5358

DRUG POLICY

AFTER THREE YEARS OF MISGUIDED POLICIES, CLINTON ADMINISTRATION MAY FINALLY BE ENLISTING IN WAR ON DRUGS; HOUSE-SENATE TASK FORCE TO OFFER DRUG POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

With today's announcement that the Clinton administration will be seeking to increase both funding and staffing levels for the Office of National Drug Control Policy, I hope that after three years of "just saying nothing," President Clinton may finally be enlisting in the War on Drugs.

I join with millions of concerned Americans in welcoming President Clinton to our ranks. As I have often said, the war on drugs should not be a partisan issue. A drug dealer does not ask our children whether they are Democrats or Republicans before he tries to peddle his poison.

President's Policies Have Made Drug War Tougher to Win

The sad fact is, however, that the War on Drugs will be tougher to win because of three years of misguided policies of the Clinton administration.

It will be tougher to win because one of the President's first actions was to cut the staff of the Office of National Drug Control Policy by 80%.

It will be tougher to win because the President's decision to cut resources to interdiction efforts led to a 53% decrease in our ability to seize or turn back drug shipments.

It will be tougher to win because a dangerous message was sent to our kids by a surgeon general who repeatedly called for the legalization of drugs.

It will be tougher to win because federal judges appointed by President Clinton use technicalities and faulty reasoning to let drug dealers free.

Given all this, it is no wonder that according to the administration's own study--the 1995 Department of Health and Human Services "Monitoring the Future" study -- during the past three years, the monthly use of illicit drugs has increased an average of 79% for students in the eighth to twelfth grades.

And it is also no wonder that New York Democrat Congressman Charlie Rangel--one of America's most respected anti-drug advocates--had this to say about the Clinton administration:

"I have been in Congress for over two decades, and I have never, never, never found any administration that has been so silent on this great challenge to the American people."

Few Americans have fought as hard and as long in the war on drugs as Democrat Congressman Charlie Rangel of New York.

(more)

Task Force to Issue Report by April

While the Clinton administration has been silent, the Republican Congress has not. Last year, Speaker Gingrich and I appointed a House-Senate Task Force on National Drug Policy. We asked them to meet with the experts in this field, to speak with Americans across the country, and to offer recommendations on how Congress can put the fight with drugs back on the national agenda.

Led by Senator Grassley, Senator Hatch, Congressman Zeliff, and Congressman Hyde, the task force has acted in an expeditious manner, and they will issue their final report before the end of the month.

Task forces and task force reports are a dime a dozen in Washington. But this report will be different because its recommendations won't be filed away and forgotten--they will be acted upon.

Entertainment Industry: Send Anti-Drug Message

I will also continue to remind the entertainment industry of the very important role they play in the fight against drugs.

Surveys suggest that our kids regard what they see on television entertainment programs as much more influential than what they hear in anti-drug education classes.

A message that drugs are O.K. or harmless--a message that has been seen in television and movies and heard in popular music on an increasing basis--is a message we should not and must not tolerate.

With committed leadership, a comprehensive drug strategy like that to be recommended by the Republican task force, and a strong and united anti-drug message, together we can and--once again--will win the War on Drugs.

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