

Thank you President Clinton for finally speaking out for drug policy reform!

In an interview published on December 25, 2000¹ President Clinton expressed the need for dramatic reform in drug policy.



Here are President Clinton's views:

"We really need a re-examination of our entire policy on imprisonment."

". . . small amounts of marijuana have been decriminalized in some places, and should be."

"...a lot of people are in prison today because they have drug problems or alcohol problems. And too many of them are getting out-particularly out of state systems-without treatment, without education, without skill, without serious efforts at job placement.

"I think the sentences in many cases are too long for nonviolent offenders, and the facilities are not structured to maximize success when people get out ... I think this whole thing needs to be re-examined."

"I certainly think [mandatory sentences] need to be re-examined. And the disparities are unconscionable between crack and powdered cocaine. I tried to change that. The Republican Congress was willing to narrow but not eliminate them, the theory being that people who use crack were more violent than people who used cocaine. What they really meant was: People who used crack were more likely to be poor-and, coincidentally black or brown. And therefore not have money. Those people that used cocaine were more likely to be rich, pay for it and therefore be peaceful."

"I don't believe, by and large, in permanent lifetime penalties. There is a bill in Congress today that has bipartisan support-that would restore voting rights to former prisoners after their full sentences have been discharged."

Let's pray George W. Bush will face up to this important issue at the beginning of his term in office, not the end.

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¹ Interview of President Clinton by Jan Wenner, Rolling Stone, December 28, 2000. <http://www.rollingstone.com>