

# Who says we are winning the \$19 billion-a-year drug war?

- New drugs and more dangerous forms of the old drugs are widely available, e.g. crack and methamphetamine.<sup>1</sup>

- Adolescent drug use has been increasing since 1990.<sup>2</sup>

- The age at which people first try heroin, cocaine, and marijuana is constantly dropping because there are so many new users.<sup>3</sup>

- The price of heroin and cocaine is at its lowest point in 20 years and the purity of both drugs is at near record levels.<sup>4</sup>

- Overdose deaths and mentions of drugs in hospital emergency rooms are at record levels.<sup>5</sup>

- Bans on the sale and availability of clean syringes have added significantly to the spread of HIV/AIDS.<sup>6</sup>

**Who says we're winning . . . other than frightened politicians, ideologues, and people who make their living from prohibition?**

**Prohibition. It still doesn't work.**

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<sup>1</sup> ONDCP, National Drug Control Strategy, "Methamphetamine Lab Seizures, by State 1995-2001," pg 108, Table 67, February 2002 citing El Paso Intelligence Center; ONDCP.

<sup>2</sup> Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, *Monitoring the Future* (December 2001).

<sup>3</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies, "Summary of Findings from the 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse" (Rockville, MD: SAMHSA, September 2001).

<sup>4</sup> ONDCP, *The Price of Illicit Drugs: 1981 Through the Second Quarter of 2000*, prepared by Abt Associates (Washington, DC: ONDCP, October 2001), Table 1, pp. 28-30, and Table 2, pp. 31-33.

<sup>5</sup> Murphy, Sheila L., Centers for Disease Control, "Deaths: Final Data for 1998", National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 48, No. 11 (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, July 24, 2000), pp. 1, 10; Office of Applied Studies, *Drug Abuse Warning Network, 2000* (March 2001 update).

<sup>6</sup> CDC, *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, 2000*, 12 (2) 2001, Table 30; Lurie, P. & Drucker, E., "An Opportunity Lost: HIV Infections Associated with Lack of a National Needle-Exchange Programme in the USA," *Lancet*, 349:604-8 (1997).