



HR0275

LRB102 18309 ECR 26048 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, On June 17, 1971, President Richard Nixon declared drug abuse as "public enemy number one in the United States" and launched a failed, costly, and inhumane "all out offensive" War on Drugs; this War would prove to be the United States' longest and costliest war and ultimately a complete and shameful failure; and

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WHEREAS, In January of 1972, President Nixon created the Office of Drug Abuse Law Enforcement (ODALE) to wage a government war on otherwise peaceful and innocent Americans who voluntarily chose to ingest plants, weed, and intoxicants forbidden by the government; in July of 1973, ODALE was consolidated, along with several other federal drug agencies, into the newly established Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) as a new "super agency" to handle all aspects of the War on Drugs; and

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WHEREAS, In 1994, President Nixon's counsel and assistant for domestic affairs John Ehrlichman revealed the real enemies of the Nixon administration were not drug abusers but were the anti-war left and Blacks Americans; he noted that the War on Drugs was actually designed as an evil, deceptive, and sinister policy to wage a war on those two groups; and

1 WHEREAS, John Ehrlichman claimed "we knew we couldn't make
2 it illegal to be either against the war or blacks, but by
3 getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and
4 blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we
5 could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their
6 leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify
7 them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were
8 lying about the drugs? Of course we did"; and

9 WHEREAS, The growing cost of the War on Drugs is now
10 impossible to ignore; there have been billions of dollars
11 wasted, bloodshed in Latin America and on the streets of our
12 own cities, and millions of lives destroyed; and

13 WHEREAS, Between 1925 and the early 1970s, the male
14 incarceration rate was remarkably stable at about 200 men per
15 100,000 population, or 1 U.S. male per 500, according to data
16 from the Bureau of Justice Statistics; by 1986, about a
17 decade-and-a-half after the War on Drugs started locking up
18 drug users and dealers, the male incarceration rate doubled to
19 400 per 100,000 population; and

20 WHEREAS, Within another decade, the male incarceration
21 rate doubled again to more than 800 by 1996 before reaching a
22 historic peak of 956 in 2008 (about one in 100); this was
23 almost five times higher than the stable rate before the War on

1 Drugs; and

2 WHEREAS, The arrest and incarceration data demonstrates
3 that the War on Drugs had a significantly much greater
4 negative effect on Black and Hispanics Americans when compared
5 to White Americans; intensified enforcement of drug laws
6 disproportionately subjected Blacks and Hispanic Americans to
7 new mandatory minimum sentences despite lower levels of drug
8 use and no higher demonstrated levels of trafficking when
9 compared to White Americans; this makes the War on Drugs even
10 more shameful for its devastating and disproportionately
11 adverse effects on America's most disadvantaged populations;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, While there could have been other factors that
14 contributed to the increased male incarceration rate between
15 the early 1970s and the peak in 2008, research clearly shows
16 that the War on Drugs, along with mandatory minimum sentencing
17 in the 1980s, were all significant contributing factors to the
18 unprecedented rate of incarcerated Americans; and

19 WHEREAS, Since the 2008 peak, the male incarceration rate
20 has been gradually declining in each of the last seven years of
21 available data through 2016; this is possibly because of the
22 decriminalization of marijuana at the city and state level,
23 the legalization of recreational marijuana at the city and

1 state levels, and the legalization of medical marijuana at the
2 state level; and

3 WHEREAS, The War on Drugs has proven to be a costly, failed
4 disaster that shamefully affected some of America's most
5 vulnerable populations; therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
7 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
8 we recognize the shameful and discriminatory history of the
9 War on Drugs in the United States.