



S.O.S. 
Save Our Society From Drugs™

2009
Annual Report

President and Founder Betty S. Sembler

"Save Our Society was launched to engage individuals in promoting and preserving sound drug policies. Working together, we can be successful in protecting our nation's youth, families and communities. Thank you for your dedication to this important cause."



Executive Director and Founding Board Member Calvin Fay

"As we gear up for 2010, we at Save Our Society From Drugs want to thank our supporters and members for their tireless efforts that made 2009 a success. Without your hard work and dedication S.O.S. would not be the leading organization tracking drug legislation and initiatives and battling the pro-drug lobby across the nation. We remain committed to our mission and to increasing our efforts in demanding sound drug policies that reflect the best interest of all Americans. We thank you for your continued support and encourage you to reflect on additional commitments you would be willing to make to enhance our mission."

Other Officers and Board Members Include

Secretary/Treasurer

Stephanie Haynes, Advisory Board Member
Drug Prevention Network of the Americas

Drew Edwards

Behavioral Medicine Consultant/Private Practitioner

T. Williard Fair

President, Greater Miami Urban League

Our Mission Statement

Save Our Society From Drugs (S.O.S.) was founded by community activist and drug prevention/education specialist Betty S. Sembler. The purpose of S.O.S. is to help Americans defeat ballot initiatives, statutory proposals and other attempts to "medicalize" unsafe, ineffective and unapproved drugs such as marijuana, heroin and crack cocaine.

S.O.S. works to prevent, counter and refute all drug legalization efforts throughout our nation. Through grassroots and direct lobbying, education and all other legal means at our disposal, we work to reduce illegal drug use, drug addiction and drug-related illness and death.

STATE LEVEL LEGISLATION

As predicted, 2009 proved to be an eventful year in terms of tracking drug legalization efforts and activities, showing a 31% increase in the introduction of pro-drug legislation compared to 2008. Throughout the year, 84 pieces of pro-drug legislation were introduced across 28 states.

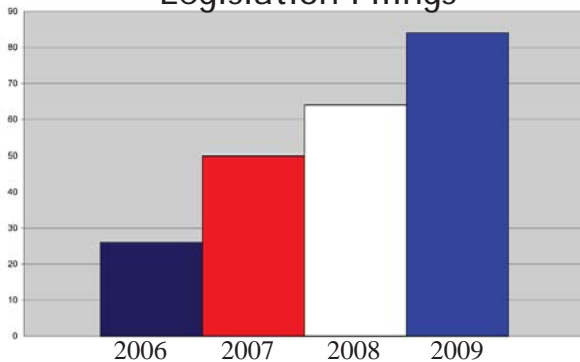
Due to the aggressive efforts of S.O.S., 65 bills were successfully defeated, including "medical" marijuana bills in Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota (by veto), New Hampshire (by veto), North Carolina, and South Dakota. We were also successful in defeating bills in Connecticut, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Texas and Vermont that sought to decriminalize up to an ounce of marijuana. 10 pro-drug bills remain open in 4 states, and all will be carried over into the 2010 legislative session.

Of the 84 introduced bills, 8 passed, including a bill in Rhode Island that will establish marijuana dispensaries, bills in both New Mexico and Maine that will study and regulate industrial hemp and a bill in Maine that makes the possession of 2.5 ounces of marijuana a civil violation punishable by a mere fine. A bill in New Jersey that will allow for the so-called medical use of marijuana and the establishment of for-profit marijuana dispensaries unfortunately passed at the beginning of 2010, but S.O.S. and colleagues were successful in dramatically restricting the final version of the bill.

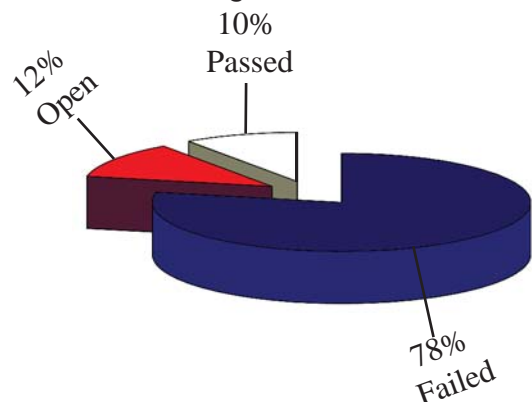
Special Highlight-Connecticut

SB 349 sought to lessen the penalty for possession of one ounce of marijuana to an infraction rather than an unclassified misdemeanor. The Senate Judiciary Committee held a lengthy public hearing and long time colleague and anti-drug advocate Senator Toni Boucher testified against the bill. With help from Senator Boucher, S.O.S. was able to submit further testimony refuting false claims submitted by proponents of the legislation. SB 349 was killed after the vice president of the CT chapter of NORML was arrested for sending a harassing and threatening email to Senator Boucher about her testimony and efforts to oppose the bill.

Pro-Legalization
Legislation Filings



Pro-Legalization
Legislation 2009



STATE LEVEL ANTI-DRUG EFFORTS

During 2009, 32 states have proactively introduced 85 pieces of anti-drug legislation to strengthen efforts to combat drug use and abuse. This number is a significant increase from 32 anti-drug legislative efforts in 2008. Of the 85 introduced bills, 16 passed, and they include bills in Nebraska and South Dakota that categorize Salvia as a controlled substance, a bill that will establish a prescription drug monitoring program in Florida, a bill that will make it a crime in North Dakota for defrauding a urine test and a bill in New Mexico that will generate a child abuse charge for having a minor in a meth house.

Special highlight-Florida

In 2008 S.O.S. collaborated with colleagues in Washington to pass the Ryan Haight Act, federal legislation that addressed easy access to illegitimate on-line pharmacies. In 2009 we continued our efforts to fight prescription drug abuse by supporting state legislative efforts to establish Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs) and Official Prescription Programs.

Florida has seen the devastating effects of not having such programs in place. In 2008, 8,556 drug-related deaths occurred in the state of Florida. According to the 2008 Medical Examiners Commission Drug Report, prescription drugs (benzodiazepines and opioids) tracked through the report continued to be found more often than illicit drugs, both lethal (81%) and non-lethal (72%), accounting for 75% of all drug occurrences.

S.O.S. worked closely with community coalitions and the Florida Office of Drug Control to pass legislation that will establish a PDMP, bringing Florida in line with 38 states that previously passed similar legislation. We believe this is a monumental step in decreasing the amount of harmful, highly addictive prescription drugs sold on the street being obtained by theft, fraudulent prescriptions or doctor shopping.

Prescription drug abuse is an epidemic in Florida, and S.O.S. will continue to make this battle a top priority by participating in community education efforts and taking an active role in the implementation of the state's prescription drug monitoring program.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOCUS

In 2009 S.O.S. worked with local colleagues to engage city and town councils to get more involved in shaping drug policy. We focused on states with established medi-pot programs in efforts to set guidelines and close program loopholes in order to reduce the heavily abused programs.

Special Highlight-Pot Shops

Marijuana dispensaries, also known as pot shops, are in business in several states to make money and will sell marijuana to anyone who produces a written recommendation. These recommendations can be obtained by paying physicians a fee and claiming any medical condition, even a headache. Pot shops claim to operate as nonprofit, but they have been tied to organized crime gangs and are often multi-million dollar profit centers. Common secondary impacts to communities where dispensaries are located include: street dealers who loiter nearby to sell at a lower price than the dispensary, marijuana smoking in public and in front of minors, an increase in traffic accidents and driving under the influence arrests in which marijuana is implicated and the loss of other commercial businesses who do not want to be located in the vicinity of marijuana dispensaries.

In California, S.O.S. collaborated with The Inland Valley Drug Free Community Coalition and The Coalition for a Drug Free California to take back communities and push out pot shops. Working together, we were able to arm community members with information, and they in turn showed up to city and town council meetings, determined to take back their neighborhoods. Our efforts have paid off!

Within the last two-years, over 200 cities and 14 counties in California have banned or passed a moratorium on pot shops. This number speaks volumes about what happens when communities see through the smokescreen and are enlightened as to what pot shops really bring their communities-more illegal drug use, more crimes, and more of our youth being sold marijuana (and sometimes other drugs) from a so-called medical marijuana patient.

California was not the only state to struggle with marijuana dispensary issues in 2009. After Attorney General Eric Holder announced that the federal authorities would not prosecute marijuana dispensaries that operated within their state guidelines, pot shops started opening at an alarming rate in the state of Colorado. Proponents of "medical" marijuana saw this statement as a victory, when in reality it is how federal authorities have been dealing with pot shops all along, since most of them operate in violation of state laws.

Using the same model that has been successful in California, S.O.S. began in 2009 to work with city and town councils in Colorado. It appears that no less than 40 city councils have taken up the issue of marijuana dispensaries. The initiative passed by voters in Colorado differs from what was passed by California voters in that the Colorado initiative specifically allowed for the establishment of marijuana dispensaries. Cities and counties in Colorado are now unsure if they have the legal authority to ban the establishment of dispensaries or if their actions are limited to zoning regulations. The issue is being brought before the court and will also be addressed at the legislative level during the 2010 session.

111TH FIRST CONGRESSIONAL SESSION

Pro-Drug Congressional Legislation



During the first year of the 111th Congressional session, bills were introduced by Representative Barney Frank to provide for the “medical” use of marijuana and to eliminate federal penalties for possession of marijuana. With pressure from S.O.S., neither bill has seen movement since its introduction. President Obama has said that he does not believe legalizing marijuana is a good strategy, and the Office of National Drug Control Policy Director G. Kerlikowske has said that marijuana legalization is not in his vocabulary.

Unfortunately, in spite of strong efforts by S.O.S., action to undermine established drug policy was successful on the congressional level when the House and Senate agreed on an appropriations bill that repealed language prohibiting cities and states from using their federal tax dollars on needle giveaway programs for drug addicts. From the same bill, they also removed the Barr Amendment, thus allowing D.C. to implement a “medical” marijuana program.

Anti-Drug Congressional Legislation

S.O.S. is working with members of Congress to strengthen drug policy and enhance funding opportunities for drug education, prevention, and treatment programs. Such efforts include legislation that seeks to:



- Amend the Controlled Substances Act to provide for the disposal of controlled substances through state take-back programs.
- Provide additional support for community coalitions, health care providers, parents, and others to prevent and reduce underage drinking.
- Provide grants to establish veterans’ treatment courts.
- Respond to problems that DEA enforcement officials have identified in the implementation of the Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act of 2006.
- Prohibit the manufacture, marketing, sale or shipment in interstate commerce of products designed to assist in defrauding a drug test.

S.O.S. ADVOCACY AND MEMBERSHIP

S.O.S. utilizes Cap-Wiz, a web-based program that enables us to post alerts, distribute lobbying materials and engage others to send advocacy messages. The system allows us to send state-specific alerts or national alerts. Our alerts are received by 19,005 subscribers, up 3,633 subscribers from 2008. In 2009, S.O.S. subscribers sent out 3,919 advocacy messages to over 500 elected officials, more than tripling our total number of 1,208 messages sent in 2008.



In 2008, Cap-wiz added a new feature known as Alert Blaster. This feature allows our organization's alerts to be posted on other sites such as AOL, Yahoo, MSN and Congress.org. In 2009 our custom alerts were accessed 5,237 times on other sites, bringing the viewer back to our S.O.S. website.

S.O.S. continues to offer membership packages to individuals and organizations. All monies received from membership packages help S.O.S. in its ongoing efforts to counter and refute drug legalization attempts throughout our nation. Advantages to being a member include the following:

- A strong voice for your concerns on drug-related bills and ballot initiatives in your state and at the federal level.
- Networking with other grassroots organizations and individuals in your state who are concerned about the drug problem and/or specific legislation.
- Bi-monthly notification of active drug-related legislation at the state and federal level, including bill status, committee location and contact information.
- Template letters including specific talking points on drug-related bills of concern.
- Upon request, analysis of bills that are on our active legislation report in your state.
- Media guidance and support.
- Lobbying support on drug-related issues.
- Access to research and materials relevant to active drug-related legislation.
- Background information on what drives the pro-drug political agenda.

YOU CAN:

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Save Our Society From Drugs is incorporated in the District of Columbia under Internal Revenue Code 501 (c)(4) as a nonprofit organization. Because of our status, your donations to S.O.S. are not tax-deductible. Our organization is funded solely through the contributions of like-minded individuals and organizations that want to promote sound drug policies that protect our children and help us push back drug legalization efforts.

A NEW FACE

In 2009 S.O.S. updated its website. The new website includes two blog topics and individual state pages. By clicking the interactive map on the homepage, website users are able to go to a state page and find alerts, news and legislative updates specific to that state. Each state page also contains a link to the state's drug policy history, and in some states the page includes links to our community partners.

With the click of a button, users are able to Take Action! on any of our custom alerts and send an advocacy message to their elected official. The new site also includes an "Issues" section where users can find talking points on subjects with which S.O.S. is actively involved.

Check out the new site at www.saveoursociety.org and be sure to visit the "Donation" and "Membership" pages!



FUNDRAISING AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Tough economic times, felt in all areas of life across our nation, are especially hard on nonprofits such as S.O.S. who rely solely on the generous contributions of donors to carry out our mission. Our 501 c(4) status means that S.O.S. is able to use dollars raised to engage in grassroots and direct lobbying to promote sound drug policies and refute drug legalization efforts. Our 501 c(4) status also means that contributions are not tax deductible; therefore, as an organization we are not able to participate in some fundraising efforts that have proven effective for other nonprofit organizations, such as raising money via social networking sites. Keeping these restrictions in mind, we were able to come up with some creative fundraising solutions.

S.O.S. now has its own credit card offered through Capitol One. \$25 is donated to our organization after your first purchase with the card, and 1% of every purchase thereafter. It is an easy way to donate to S.O.S. with your everyday purchases. To support S.O.S. with every purchase you make, go to www.CardLabConnect.com/saveoursocietyfromdrugs or follow the link on our website at www.saveoursociety.org.



In September 2009, S.O.S. hosted a very exciting fundraising event. The Honorable Newt Gingrich graciously donated his time and participated in a Round Table Event sponsored by S.O.S. The event gave participants the opportunity to pose meaningful questions to the former Speaker of the House. Participants received a signed copy of Mr. Gingrich's book *Real Change* and posed for a picture with the former Speaker and his wife, Callista, which was later autographed. The intimate setting was a success, raising much needed funds for S.O.S!

2010 FOCUS

2010 is shaping up to be the year of ballot initiatives. Drug legalization advocates are collecting signatures for as many as 9 proposed pro-drug initiatives in order to qualify them for the 2010 state ballots. Statewide efforts include "medical" marijuana initiatives in Arizona, Florida, South Dakota and the US Virgin Islands, initiatives to tax and regulate marijuana in California (with 3 separate initiative drives), and Oregon, as well as a drive in Oregon to set up a "medical" marijuana supply system. Sponsors of the 2009 vetoed marijuana legislation in Minnesota have pledged to introduce a "medical" marijuana initiative, in Arkansas a criminal defense attorney has filed a proposed constitutional amendment that would allow for the use of marijuana as a so-called medicine and a group in Nevada has begun to collect signatures for an initiative to legalize marijuana.

Our 2010 focus in Florida will be organizing opposition to a possible medi-pot 2010 or 2012 initiative. We will be reaching out to local government agencies, medical societies, law enforcement associations and anti-drug coalitions in efforts to have them sign a formal resolution opposing the legalization of marijuana including legalizing under the guise of medicine. We will also organize meetings with legislators to educate them on the issue and explore different strategies to defeat the initiative.



North Carolina. We also anticipate a push for pot shops in states that currently have established medi-pot programs.

S.O.S. will actively search for opportunities to support federal and state legislative efforts that seek to strengthen our efforts to combat drug use and abuse. Such efforts in 2010 will include expansions of drug free workplaces, expansions of drug court programs to include the establishment of veterans' treatment courts, the establishment of prescription drug monitoring programs and official prescription programs, restricting access to drug paraphernalia and identifying Salvia Divinorum as a controlled substance.

We will continue to expand our collaboration with drug-free coalitions and grassroots organizations to coordinate anti-legalization efforts nationwide. Collaboration will include establishing state specific strategic plans to oppose pro-drug efforts that include letter writing campaigns, individual websites, face to face meetings with lawmakers and training and organizing grassroots efforts.

In 2010 S.O.S. will focus on expanding its online presence through social networking sites such as Facebook. In 2009 we signed up as a cause that people could join through Facebook. As a cause on Facebook, we are able to send out messages to our members, updating them on legislative efforts and linking them back to our website to Take Action! on alerts and participate in blog topics.

We anticipate 2010 to be busy with pro-legalization efforts in many states. Legislators in New Hampshire, Vermont and Washington have pre-filed bills for 2010 that seek to decriminalize or legalize marijuana. "Medical" marijuana bills introduced in Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin will carry over to the 2010 session, and we expect "medical" marijuana bills to be introduced in Alabama, Delaware, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Missouri, New Hampshire and

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