

Deschamps for DA
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Series Post #1
ISSUE#1 : DRUGS

BACKGROUND: Unfortunately, we all know Heroin, Meth, Spice, mis-used prescriptions, & other drugs of abuse are devastating our homes, families, communities and our nation. When I was your D.A. 25 years ago, during DUI roadblocks on I-25, we ran a drug dog past cars while they had stopped to produce their license and registrations. This way, the time a driver was inconvenienced by having to produce a license & registration at the DUI stop wasn't increased, & we could still investigate for drugs. The Roadblocks occurred at different times of the day, on different times of the week, and were never allowed to exceed two hours in length. We found an average of 10 times more drivers on drugs, or on both drugs & alcohol, than were under the influence of alcohol alone. We also intercepted a load of drugs every single time. The Federal Courts decided we were using the legal DUI roadblocks as an illegal pretext to find drugs (we weren't) & stopped our use of the drug dogs after two years of getting drugs off of the streets.

I have no idea why it's OK to look for alcohol abuse but unconstitutional to look for drugs.

CURRENT PRACTICE: is to continue the so-called War on Drugs. Everyone is "concerned" about the drug problem that just keeps mushrooming in our culture. Law enforcement sets up years-long campaigns that sometimes result in making a bust of a low-level dealer- usually in an election year. Addicts are arrested when present during a raid, or found in possession of drugs during investigations of other charges such as credit card fraud, theft, or burglary, or when pulled over for a traffic ticket. Meanwhile, everyone talks about the problem, vents their frustration that the addict refuses to listen to reason, while without realizing it, we continue to enable our loved ones, employees, and friends hoping they will someday come to their senses. We are losing that war badly as more and more of our children are trying drugs and at a younger age.

THE D.A. SHOULD propose we change the "War on drugs" to the "War on Drug USE." The only way to stop drugs is to stop the demand. Stopping Drug Use will stop the demand. In order to do this we must make our children, our relatives, our friends, and our employees realize that drug use is not normal behavior. We are not "victims" who can't cope with the disappointments and stresses that life gives to all of us, but come from people who are strong and disciplined. We want to make the world around our children & grandchildren a better place instead of adding to its violence and misery. No one person can do this. It does take a community to raise a child-not the government, but all of us, individually. Are we a community or not?

We are doing a terrible job as members of that community. We must constantly confront the user, show them that they have to lie in order to use drugs. I ask defendants "Would you use rat poison?" "Hell no" is usually the reply. That's because they tell themselves the truth about rat poison. To use drugs, one has to lie & tell themselves "I'm a victim, I can't deal with the stress in my life, drugs are illegal but they're not so bad, they're not ruining my entire life; they won't kill me, they're not breaking the hearts of everyone who loves me, my kids don't know I'm using..." They say they shouldn't have to face the consequences, or go to jail or prison because their kids are everything & need them. I show them an open hand representing their kids and an open hand representing the drugs and ask them which one they keep choosing. I tell them that their kids aren't everything-the drugs are. You can see them drop their heads in the sudden realization of that actual truth. We must educate our loved ones and show them what they are doing. Each and every one of us must constantly assume that our loved ones on drugs are going to lie in order to keep using. We must constantly confront them, stop covering up for them, stop cleaning up their messes and insist that they take responsibility for their choices and actions. Stop giving them the benefit of the doubt unless and until they earn our trust. As Ronald Reagan said, "Trust, but verify."

EFFICIENT TARGETING: I will continue to address the Supply side of the Drug Problem, and I will listen to those citizens and to my investigators who know where the serious drug dealers are. We can then follow-up those leads with every resource of the office. Stakeouts, Traffic violations, building code violations, littering violations, noise complaints, or garbage in the yard, unlicensed pets, etc., in addition to more

traditional methods. But that side of the problem will continue. Any vacuum in the supply side is quickly filled so long as the demand is so great.

Regardless of who is elected as the next D.A., the focus must be on actual "Dealers" instead of policies directed at low-level addicts who in their minds are only sharing their drugs with another addict. The D.A. should prosecute trafficking charges regardless of the status or position of the dealer. I will not negotiate plea bargains in actual drug trafficking cases. If we are to tell them they must be responsible for their actions, then we must hold them responsible for their actions. Mere addicts should also be prosecuted, but as a method of intervention where they are first given an opportunity to escape a life-altering felony conviction if they successfully complete serious treatment for their addiction.

TREATMENT: We must find a way to get more treatment funding for qualified treatment providers. Many addicts are afflicted with more than one mental health condition, and without treatment are unable to "Just say No" when given the chance to self-medicate. REHABILITATION: Drug Courts are one of the effective means to teach addicts how to take back their sobriety and control of their lives. These cost only a fraction of what imprisonment costs. We must insist that our state and county governments fund adequate treatment, and focus on rehabilitation more than incarceration. Drug Courts in smaller communities like we have in the 7th Judicial District often have waiting lists, and existing funding is limited to only 15 to 20 clients in each county.

RESULT: Increased involvement in our communities and with our neighbors and especially their kids, and lives and future generations given a chance for a decent life. And, yes, another and more immediate result is increased taxes. But in the long run, the costs would be much, much, much less in terms of lost loved ones as well as dollars. The resources now spent on the so called War on Drugs could be spent elsewhere-better education, road repairs, our outdated & failing national infrastructure?

There is a saying: "If you're not part of the solution, then you're part of the problem." Whether you support me in the election & I am elected, or not, let's start changing the Drug culture. We can do this!