

# -2011 ANNUAL REPORT

**Indiana Civil Liberties Union, Inc.**  
**d/b/a American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana**  
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS  
YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2011

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
<b>REVENUES AND SUPPORT:</b>				
Contributions	\$ 162,081	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 162,081
Court awards	274,015	-	-	274,015
Special events	102,347	-	-	102,347
Investment return	153	-	2,166	2,319
Miscellaneous	307	-	-	307
Total Revenues and Support	<u>538,903</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,166</u>	<u>541,069</u>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>				
Salaries, severance, and contract labor	313,891	-	-	313,891
Payroll taxes and benefits	97,264	-	-	97,264
Litigation expenses	76,999	-	-	76,999
General and administrative	173,137	-	-	173,137
Special events	31,476	-	-	31,476
Depreciation and amortization	17,272	-	-	17,272
Interest	8,110	-	-	8,110
Bad debt expense	13,980	-	-	13,980
Total Expenses	<u>732,129</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>732,129</u>
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	(193,226)	-	2,166	(191,060)
<b>NET ASSETS, beginning of year</b>	<u>489,736</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>17,358</u>	<u>512,094</u>
<b>NET ASSETS, end of year</b>	<u>\$ 296,510</u>	<u>\$ 5,000</u>	<u>\$ 19,524</u>	<u>\$ 321,034</u>

# The Case Against Vouchers:

# 8

## Reasons

By Leonard Goldstein

### 1. The large majority of private schools are run by religious groups.

The U.S. Department of Education says 76% of private schools have a religious affiliation and more than 80% of students attending private schools attend religious institutional schools. Religious schools indoctrinate as well as educate. Students receive religious instruction and attend religious services. Religious schools are an important alternative to the public system but...

### 2. Vouchers force Americans to pay taxes to support religion.

In America all religious activities should be supported with voluntary contributions. Madison, Jefferson, and other Founders opposed taxation to support religion.

### 3. Vouchers take money from the public schools to support unaccountable private schools.

Private schools can deny admission to any student on the basis of religion, disability, language proficiency, disciplinary record, etc.

### 4. Vouchers do not improve academic performance.

Studies of voucher programs at Milwaukee, Cleveland, and Washington D.C. reveal that reading and math scores were no better than those of students in corresponding public schools. There was no significant difference in student-teacher ratios or teacher availability for extra-curricular activities.

### 5. Saying that vouchers help the poor is suspect.

Voucher payments are rarely enough to cover the entire cost of private school and only families with money can come up with the cost of tuition balance, uniforms, transportation, books, and other supplies. In Cleveland, the majority of families who received a

voucher did not use it because they could not handle the additional costs. The real story is that vouchers actually hurt low-income families by weakening public schools. If the Fort Wayne Community Schools, for example, lost only two students per school to the voucher program, they would lose income of about \$600,000 annually, and there is no way they could make it up. The buildings still need maintenance, and losing two students does not save a teacher. The only result is the erosion of the public program by making success more difficult to achieve.

### 6. It is the private school that chooses and will determine whether a student will be admitted.

Contrary to the claim, it is not parents who have the “choice”. Real choice is already offered by Fort Wayne Community Schools as well as by many other school districts.

### 7. Vouchers can result in speculator profiteers.

One school in Milwaukee was run by a man with a long criminal record. In Cleveland, one school was set up in a dilapidated building with inadequate heat and no fire alarms. Another “educated” the children by having them watch videos all day.

### 8. Most public schools do a good job.

Those that don't should be fixed, not handicapped by reducing resources. Politicians pushing vouchers (and charter schools) offer them as a panacea while ignoring real issues like adequate funding, class size, and teacher training.

Our legislators have diverse agendas. Some are genuinely concerned and want to benefit our children. I submit that they are not fully aware of the consequences of the Governor's drive to privatize public schools.

# ACLU-IN First Wednesdays Discussion Series Continues

By Reba Boyd Wooden, VP Education Committee

“Police Use of Force”, the third program in the current First Wednesdays Discussion Series was held on Wednesday, August 3, at the WFYI Studios. Terry Curry, Marion County Prosecutor; William E. Marsh, Federal Defender; Larry A. Landis, Executive Director, Indiana Public Defenders Council, Indianapolis; and John F. Kautzman, Partner with Ruckelshaus Kautzman Blackwell Bemis & Hasbrook, who represented the local Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), served as panel members. Amos C. Brown, Radio One and host of “Afternoons with Amos,” was moderated the discussion.

It was an interesting and thought-provoking discussion. All panelists acknowledged that because members of the police force are human, their personal emotions can enter into their decision making process. For this reason, the Police Department has developed training programs to help officers remain professional even in emotional situations. An interesting fact brought out is that the number of police shootings has declined drastically since the 1970s. Panelists attributed this to better police training and advances in technology, which provide police with alternatives to the use of deadly force.

Bullying is the topic for the September 7th program. Future topics under consideration include Housing Discrimination in Indiana and Transportation. If you have a suggestion for a First Wednesday Discussion, email [gholmes@aclu-in.org](mailto:gholmes@aclu-in.org) .

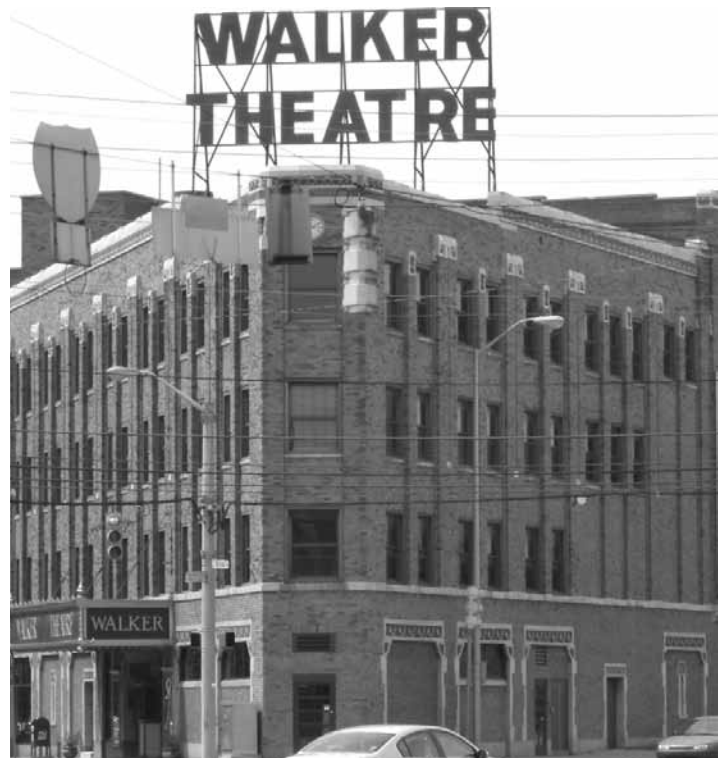
Currently, these programs are held at noon on the first Wednesday of every month. However, a time change to accommodate more people is being considered. Check the ACLU-IN website, [www.aclu-in.org](http://www.aclu-in.org), for the exact time of upcoming First Wednesdays. If you have a preference as to what time of day these should be held, please email [gholmes@aclu-in.org](mailto:gholmes@aclu-in.org).

The three First Wednesdays Discussions of this season, Immigration, Education Reform, and Police Use of Force, were taped and are available for viewing on the ACLU-IN website, [www.aclu-in.org](http://www.aclu-in.org).

## Raising the Bar for Civil Liberties

- When:** Friday, September 23, 7:30 pm,  
**Where:** Madame C.J. Walker Theater Center  
617 Indiana Avenue, Indianapolis  
**Speaker:** William P. Quigley  
Professor of Law,  
Loyola University,  
New Orleans College of Law.  
**Topic:** Eternal Vigilance and Racism –  
Plenty of Work Left to Do

**The presentation is free and open to the public.**



# 2011 Indiana general assembly voting records on selected bills affecting civil liberties

By Joan Laskowski, VP Legislation

## 2011 Senate Votes On Bills With Civil Liberties Impact

**1. Corrections and sentencing** - SB 561 (Steele, Bray, Foley)  
Permits sentences for low-level drug and theft offenses to be diverted from prison to community programs and treatment. Senate amendment greatly lengthens prison time for those convicted of violent felonies.

**Status:** Senate passed 46-3. No House hearing.

**ACLU-IN** supported the original bill promoting rehabilitation, reduced recidivism and reduced prison costs but opposed the amended version requiring new prison construction.

**2. Arrest records** - HB 1211 (Turner, Steele)

Permits petitioning to limit noncriminal justice agencies' access to arrest and criminal records for certain offenders 8 years after completion of sentence and other obligations.

**Status:** Senate passed 45-5. House concurred. Governor signed.

**ACLU-IN** supported this aid to rehabilitation.

**3. School scholarships** - HB 1003 (Behning, Kruse, Yoder)

Provides a tax deduction for a parent who sends a child to a private school or home schools the child.

**Status:** Senate passed 28-22. House concurred. Governor signed.

**ACLU-IN** opposed denial of state constitutional mandate for free public schools for all and use of tax money for the benefit of any religious institution.

**4. Immigration matters** - SB 590 (Kruse, Boots, Koch)

Requires employers to use federal E-Verify database to ascertain immigration and citizenship status of applicants to avoid loss of tax deductions.

**Status:** Senate adopted conference report 35-15. House adopted. Governor signed.

**ACLU-IN** opposed preemption of federal jurisdiction, racial profiling, unreliability of federal databases.

**5. Marriage** - HJR 6 (Turner, Kruse, Banks, Tomes)

Amends the state constitution to deny Indiana recognition of same-sex marriages or civil unions.

**Status:** Senate passed 40-10. House passed. Next action: 2013 or 2014 session.

**ACLU-IN** opposed denial of equal access to a fundamental right.

**6. Abortion matters and physician privileges** - SB 328 (Sen. Leising amendment)

Limits the definition of contraception to the prevention of fertilization, which puts at risk contraceptives that prevent implantation, the beginning of pregnancy.

**Status:** Senate passed amendment 32-18.

**ACLU-IN** opposed limiting contraceptive choices.

**7. Abortion matters and physician privileges** - SB 328 (Miller, Kruse, Banks, Culver)

Prohibits abortions after 20 weeks on grounds the fetus can feel pain; requires local hospital privileges for abortion providers.

**Status:** Senate passed 39-9. Amended into HB 1210.

**ACLU-IN** opposed mandate to give a patient medically inaccurate information and a physician requirement not applied to riskier outpatient procedures.

**8. Abortion matters** - HB 1210 (Sen. Schneider amendment)  
Prohibits state Medicaid funding for Planned Parenthood of Indiana.

**Status:** Senate passed amendment 36-13.

**ACLU-IN** opposed denial of access to reproductive health care to low-income persons.

**9. Abortion matters** - HB 1210 (Turner, Miller, Walker, Banks)

Prohibits PPIN Medicaid funding. Prohibits abortions after 20 weeks except to save a woman's life; requires physicians to give a patient medically inaccurate information and to state a theological belief as fact. Prohibits abortion coverage in health insurance exchanges.

**Status:** Senate passed 35-13. House concurred. Governor signed.

**ACLU-IN** opposed restricting access to health care, to a constitutionally protected procedure, and to medically accurate information; opposed violation of physicians' First Amendment rights.

**10. Foreign law** - SB 520 (Steele, Waterman, Holdman, Borders)

Prohibits enforcement of a foreign law if it might violate a constitutional right.

**Status:** Senate passed 50-0. No House hearing.

**ACLU-IN** opposed this excluding of, e.g., treaties, human rights agreements, foreign common law.



Joan Laskowski

## 2011 HOUSE VOTES ON BILLS WITH CIVIL LIBERTIES IMPACT

- 1. Arrest records** - HB 1211 (Turner, Steele)  
Permits petitioning to limit noncriminal justice agencies' access to arrest and criminal records for certain offenders 8 years after completion of sentence and other obligations.  
**Status:** House concurred with Senate version 74-14. Governor signed.  
**ACLU-IN** supported this aid to rehabilitation.
- 2. School scholarships** - HB 1003 (Repr. Austin amendment)  
Permits parents of a student enrolled under a choice scholarship in a school that has a religious education curriculum to have the student excused from the school's religious instruction.  
**Status:** House defeated the amendment 31-60.  
**ACLU-IN** supported parents' right to guide a child's religious instruction.
- 3. School scholarships** - HB 1003 (Behning, Kruse, Yoder)  
Provides a tax deduction for a parent who sends a child to a private school or home schools the child.  
**Status:** House concurred with Senate version 56-43. Governor signed.  
**ACLU-IN** opposed denial of state constitutional mandate for free public schools for all and use of tax money for the benefit of any religious institution.
- 4. Immigration matters** - SB 590 (Kruse, Boots, Koch)  
Requires employers to use federal E-Verify database to ascertain immigration and citizenship status of applicants to avoid loss of tax deductions.  
**Status:** House adopted conference report 68-30. Senate adopted. Governor signed.  
**ACLU-IN** opposed preemption of federal jurisdiction, racial profiling, unreliability of federal databases.
- 5. State official documents to be printed in English** - HB 1255 (Crouch, Tomes)  
Requires that official documents or communications issued by the state must be issued only in the English language.  
**Status:** House passed 63-26. No Senate hearing.  
**ACLU-IN** opposed denial of equal protection.
- 6. Marriage** - HJR 6 (Turner, Kruse, Banks, Tomes)  
Amends the state constitution to deny Indiana recognition of same-sex marriages or civil unions.  
**Status:** House passed 70-26. Senate passed. Next action: 2013 or 2014 session.  
**ACLU-IN** opposed denial of equal access to a fundamental right.
- 7. Abortion matters** - HB 1210 (Repr. Riecken amendment)  
Includes rape, incest and woman's health exceptions to the ban on abortion after 20 weeks.  
**Status:** House defeated the amendment 42-54.  
**ACLU-IN** supported on the grounds of privacy, autonomy and dignity.
- 8. Abortion matters** - HB 1210 (Turner, Miller, Walker, Banks)  
Prohibits PPIN Medicaid funding. Prohibits abortions after 20 weeks except to save a woman's life; requires physicians to give a patient medically inaccurate information and to state a theological belief as fact. Prohibits abortion coverage in health insurance exchanges.  
**Status:** House concurred with Senate version 66-32. Governor signed.  
**ACLU-IN** opposed restricting access to health care, to a constitutionally protected procedure, and to medically accurate information; opposed violation of physicians' First Amendment rights.

*Continued on page 16*

## INDIANA SENATE 2011 VOTING RECORDS

SENATE AVERAGE: 30%

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	%
Alting-R	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	30
Arnold-D	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	60
Banks-R	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Becker-R	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	60
Boots-R	-	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	50
Bray-R	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Breaux-D	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	80
Broden-D	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	E	E	-	63
Buck-R	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Charbonneau-R	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Delph-R	E	+	-	-	-	-	E	-	-	-	13
Eckerty-R	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Gard-R	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
Glick-R	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Grooms-R	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
Head-R	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Hershman-R	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Holdman-R	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Hume-D	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	50
Kenley-R	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	40
Kruse-R	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Lanane-D	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	80
Landske-R	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	50
Lawson, C.-R	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	20
Leising-R	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
Long-R	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Merritt-R	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Miller-R	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Mishler-R	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
Mrvan-D	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	40
Nugent-R	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
Paul-R	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	20
Randolph-D	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	80
Rogers-D	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	80
Schneider-R	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Simpson-D	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	80
Skinner-D	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	40
Smith, J.-R	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Steele-R	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Tallian-D	-	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	-	78
Taylor-D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	90
Tomes-R	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
Walker-R	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Waltz-R	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Waterman-R	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
Wyss-R	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	E	-	22
Yoder-R	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Young, M.-R	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Young, R.-D	-	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	30
Zakas-R	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20

Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman, President-R

### KEY TO VOTING RECORDS

+ A vote in favor of the position of the ACLU-IN

- A vote contrary to the position of the ACLU-IN

0 Absent or not voting

E Excused from voting

## INDIANA HOUSE 2011 VOTING RECORDS

HOUSE AVERAGE: 42%

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	%
Austin-D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
Bacon-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Baird-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Bardon-D	0	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	100
Bartlett-D	+	+	+	+	E	+	+	+	100
Battles-D	-	+	+	-	-	-	0	+	43
Bauer-D	0	+	+	+	+	-	0	+	83
Behning-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Borders-R	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Bosma-R *	0	-	-	-	0	-	0	-	0
Brown,C.-D	0	0	+	+	+	E	+	+	100
Brown,T.-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Burton-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Cheatham-D	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	37
Cherry-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Clere-R	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	37
Crawford-D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
Crouch-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Culver-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Davis-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Davison-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Day-D	E	+	E	+	+	+	+	E	100
Delaney-D	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	87
Dembowski-D	+	+	+	+	E	+	+	+	100
Dermody-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Dobis-D	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	50
Dodge-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Dvorak-D	+	E	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
Eberhart-R	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	13
Ellspermann-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Espich-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Foley-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Friend-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Frizzell-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Fry-D	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	87
Frye-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
GiaQuinta-D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
Goodin-D	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	37
Grubb-D	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	50
Gutwein-R	+	0	-	-	-	-	+	-	29
Harris,E.-D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
Heaton-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Heuer-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	25
Hinkle-R	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	50
Karickhoff-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Kersey-D	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	63
Kirchhofer-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Klinker-D	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	75
Knollman-R	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	25
Koch-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13

### KEY TO VOTING RECORDS

+ A vote in favor of the position of the ACLU-IN

- A vote contrary to the position of the ACLU-IN

0 Absent or not voting

E Excused from voting

Continued on page 18

**INDIANA HOUSE 2011 VOTING RECORDS**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	%
Kubacki-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	25
Lawson,L.-D	+	+	+	+	E	+	+	+	100
Lehe-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Lehman-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Leonard-R	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Lutz,J.-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Mahan-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
McClain-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
McMillin-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
McNamara-R	+	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	37
Messmer-R	+	-	-	-	E	-	-	-	14
Morris-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Moseley-D	-	+	+	+	E	-	+	-	57
Moses-D	-	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	63
Neese-R	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	13
Niezgodski-D	0	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	86
Noe-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Pelath-D	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
Pflum-D	E	E	+	E	E	E	E	+	**
Pierce-D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
Pond-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	25
Porter-D	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
Pryor-D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
Reardon-D	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
Reske-D	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	50
Rhoads-R	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	25
Richardson-R	+	-	-	-	E	-	-	-	14
Riecken-D	+	E	+	0	+	+	+	+	100
Saunders-R	+	-	+	-	-	-	+	0	43
Smith,M.-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Smith,V.-D	+	+	+	+	E	+	+	+	100
Soliday-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Speedy-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Stemler-D	-	+	+	-	E	E	-	-	33
Steuerwald-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Stevenson-D	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	87
Sullivan-D	+	E	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
Summers-D	+	0	+	+	+	E	+	+	100
Thompson-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Torr-R	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	25
Truitt-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Turner-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Tyler-D	0	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	71
Ubelhor-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
VanDenburgh-D	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
VanNatter-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Welch-D	+	E	+	-	+	-	+	-	57
Wesco-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Wolkins-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Yarde-R	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13

\* As Speaker, Representative Bosma votes or not at his discretion.

\*\* Percentages are based on at least three votes.

**KEY TO VOTING RECORDS**

+ A vote in favor of the position of the ACLU-IN

- A vote contrary to the position of the ACLU-IN

0 Absent or not voting

E Excused from voting

# Gibson Speaks Frankly About the War on Drugs

By Catherine Gibson - ACLU-IN Board President



At the July ACLU-IN board meeting I asked if anyone objected to my writing my “President’s Letter” on the failure of the War on Drugs. One member reminded me to include some civil liberties reasons for suggesting that the war be cancelled, and then we drifted into a short discussion of what the newly organized ACLU had done to protest prohibition (very little). There are civil liberties galore in this issue but first the lessons of history and common sense are in front.

As a lazy librarian I checked Wikipedia on Prohibition in the United States (1919-1933) to get some core dates, and found two tantalizing sentences: “Although alcohol consumption did decline, there was a dramatic rise in organized crime in the larger cities, which now had a cash crop that was in high demand,” and “Prohibition became increasingly unpopular during the Great Depression, as the repeal movement, led by conservative Democrats and Catholics, emphasized that repeal would generate enormous sums of much needed tax revenue, and weaken the base of organized crime.

I had the revealing experience of growing up in a “dry county” in east Texas. Even my teetotaling mother knew that it was common courtesy to offer to stop by Short Station, the liquor store in the neighboring “wet” county, if we were traveling that way. It was a wink and a nod situation just the way marijuana use is to many today.

I would think that by now most people would realize that those of us who grew up in the parallel alcohol and marijuana cultures are never going to see the latter as more dangerous than the former. Most of us limit our consumption to the legal but shake our heads at the arbitrary ban on marijuana. We are fully aware of the dangers of alcohol, but just can’t remember seeing anyone doing anything life threatening ....silly, yeah....on pot.

Eisenhower wisely warned of the dangers of the military/industrial complex in the 50’s; he just didn’t have the foresight to warn of the appetites of today’s huge

prison industry. Just the briefest look at the disparities in incarcerated populations will show that African-Americans and Hispanics are bearing the brunt of the war on drugs and not the middle class white tokers in the back yards of suburbia. (Yes, I’ve smelled the stuff on my upper middle class, tree lined street.)

I admit that I just don’t have the data on the many other controlled substances that are presently illegal, but I think the time is now for a careful, realistic plan to legalize the use of marijuana and not just for medical uses. A hot toddy is a hot toddy and good for just about anything that ails you. To many, so is a toke.

The conversation that is needed has to include the FDA, agriculture, the pharmaceutical community, the tobacco industry, and yes, ordinary people. I am keenly aware that the legalization of marijuana will probably move the profits from Detroit to Grosse Pointe, but the savings in human potential are probably worth the inequities of modern business.





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