



DIANNE JACOB
SUPERVISOR, SECOND DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: May 9, 2006

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: CONDEMNING THE MEXICAN CONGRESS FOR APPROVAL OF LEGISLATION LEGALIZING DRUGS IN MEXICO (DISTRICT: All)

SUMMARY:

Overview

Today's action will adopt a resolution by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors condemning the Mexican Congress for their approval of legislation that would legalize the possession of an assortment of drugs from marijuana to heroin in Mexico. In addition, the action would direct the Chief Administrative Officer to draft a letter for the Chair's signature to send to the President of Mexico urging him to veto the legislation and to forward a copy of the County's letter to the President of the United States and the County's federal elected representatives.

Recommendation(s)

SUPERVISOR JACOB:

1. Adopt the attached Resolution condemning the Mexican Congress for approval of legislation that would legalize the possession of certain drugs in Mexico.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to draft a letter for the Chair's signature to the President of Mexico urging his veto of the legislation and to send a copy of the County's letter to the President of the United States and the County's federal representatives.

Fiscal Impact

There are no fiscal impacts associated with this recommendation.

BACKGROUND:

On April 26, 2006 the Congress of Mexico approved legislation that would legalize for personal use an array of dangerous and addictive drugs including cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and other club drugs. Mexican President Vicente Fox has indicated that he will sign the legislation.

SUBJECT: CONDEMNING THE MEXICAN CONGRESS FOR APPROVAL OF LEGISLATION LEGALIZING DRUGS IN MEXICO (DISTRICT: All)

This destructive and misguided policy would have a catastrophic impact on the health and safety of U.S. residents and communities, especially communities along the U.S./Mexico Border that are considered high intensity drug trafficking areas such as San Diego County.

Compared with all other nations, Mexico already has the single greatest influence over drug trafficking in the U.S., according to the U.S. Department of Justice. Mexican drug trafficking organizations, including the Tijuana-based Arellano Felix cartel, are the, “predominant cocaine transporters and wholesale distributors in the country, and also produce, transport and distribute much of the heroin, marijuana and methamphetamine available in U.S. drug markets” according to the National Drug Threat Assessment 2006, prepared by the National Drug Intelligence Center.

Already, nearly 90 percent of the cocaine sold in the U.S. is smuggled through Mexico. The nation is the number two supplier of heroin, the largest foreign source of marijuana and the largest producer of methamphetamine, according to the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

The decriminalization of drugs in Mexico would present Mexican drug cartels and other criminal groups with greater access to drugs and the gruesome opportunity to ship larger quantities of those drugs into the U.S., increasing their availability in U.S. neighborhoods. U.S. law enforcement, already overburdened when it comes to combating violence, money laundering and other crimes associated with international drug smuggling, would be called upon to interdict increasing quantities of drugs.

American young people, particularly those in Border counties such as San Diego, whose social skills and maturity levels are not yet complete, often cross the Border to take advantage of Mexico’s lower drinking age. The legalization of illicit drugs in Mexico would, undoubtedly, increase their prevalence in social settings. Cultural acceptance of drugs increases the likelihood that youth, both Mexican and American, will experiment with these highly-addictive and deadly substances. The U.S. Consulate previously has warned that Mexican nightclubs and bars can be havens for drug dealers and petty criminals.

A sweeping majority of Americans support restrictive drug laws. They realize that drug use is not a victimless crime. Children of drug users are often abused and neglected and many national-level studies have shown that drug-addicted parents often put their need to feed their drug addiction before the welfare of their children. Drugged driving, workplace violence, lost productivity and the healthcare needs of illegal drug users exact a hefty financial price from U.S. taxpayers. The Office of National Drug Control Policy reports that the economic cost of drug abuse to the U.S. exceeds \$180 billion annually.

In the last decade, U.S. and Mexican law enforcement agencies based in San Diego County have worked collaboratively on various interdiction operations on both sides of the Border. In 2004, U.S. law enforcement based in San Diego and Imperial Counties teamed up with their respective counterparts in Baja California to launch Operation SPEED BUMP in partnership with the County Methamphetamine Strike Force. The weeks-long effort culminated in the arrest of more than 800 people and the confiscation of thousands of pounds of illegal drugs. By legalizing dangerous drugs, the Mexican government will

SUBJECT: CONDEMNING THE MEXICAN CONGRESS FOR APPROVAL OF LEGISLATION LEGALIZING DRUGS IN MEXICO (DISTRICT: All)

undermine years of relationship-building between the two countries and compromise important bi-national law enforcement efforts with a hypocritical and contradictory policy.

Today's action will adopt a resolution by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors condemning the Mexican Congress for their recent approval of legislation that would legalize the possession of an assortment of drugs from marijuana to heroin in Mexico. In addition, the action would direct the Chief Administrative Officer to draft a letter for the Chair's signature to send to the President of Mexico urging him to veto the legislation and to forward a copy of the County's letter to the President of the United States and the County's federal elected representatives.

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors should condemn the Mexican Congress for its ill-conceived proposal to decriminalize the possession of several illegal drugs and the region's leaders should unite in calling on the President of Mexico to reject this legislation.

I urge your support.

Respectfully submitted,

DIANNE JACOB
Supervisor, Second District

SUBJECT: CONDEMNING THE MEXICAN CONGRESS FOR APPROVAL OF LEGISLATION LEGALIZING DRUGS IN MEXICO (DISTRICT: All)

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

CONCURRENCE(S)

COUNTY COUNSEL REVIEW	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Written Disclosure per County Charter Section 1000.1 Required	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
GROUP/AGENCY FINANCE DIRECTOR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Requires Four Votes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
GROUP/AGENCY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
COUNTY TECHNOLOGY OFFICE	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Other Concurrence(s): N/A

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: District Two

CONTACT PERSON(S):

Jennifer Stone

Name

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AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: _____