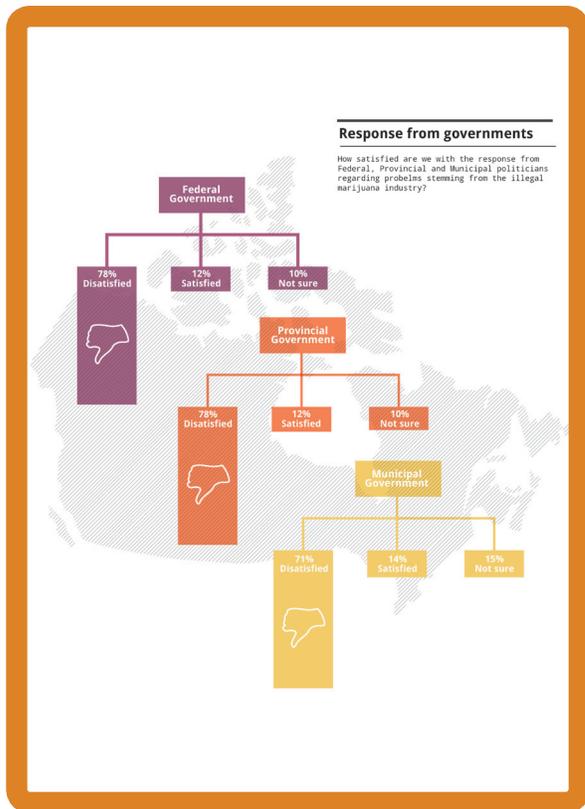


About the Stop the Violence Coalition

Stop the Violence BC is a coalition of law enforcement officials, legal experts, public health officials and academic experts from the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, University of Victoria, and the University of Northern BC. Coalition members have come together to engage all British Columbians in a discussion aimed at developing and implementing cannabis-related policies that improve public health while reducing social harms, including violent crime and gang activity.



For more poll results visit:
www.stoptheviolencebc.org/tag/poll/

Guided by the best available scientific evidence, Stop the Violence BC is calling for cannabis to be governed by a strict regulatory framework aimed at limiting use while also starving organized crime of the profits they currently reap as a result of cannabis prohibition.

Political leaders have been largely silent on this urgent public health and safety issue. Ongoing gang violence and other organized crime concerns associated with the cannabis trade in BC must be addressed by getting to the roots of the gang violence. BC needs to be a leader in starting a conversation on cannabis regulation that will lead to action.

Involving the community

The public can get involved by attending the public forums and making their voices heard, including writing to media and their mayors, councilors, MLAs and MPs to let them know that they support the coalition and its efforts.

To join the conversation, people can visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/StoptheViolenceBC or follow the campaign on Twitter at www.twitter.com/stvbc. Updates will be posted regularly on our website at: www.stoptheviolencebc.org.

Driving discussion

Over the coming months, Stop the Violence BC will encourage the public, media, politicians, academics and law enforcement to begin an open dialogue about this pressing public safety issue. Public forums with academic and law enforcement experts will be held and prominent British Columbians - including politicians - will be asked to support the call to effectively end the cannabis cash cow for organized crime, employ a public health approach for the legal regulation of cannabis, and reduce gang-related violence in BC communities.

To facilitate the discussion and support their efforts, Stop the Violence BC will release a series of fact-based reports with the latest in scientific research, crime statistics and poll data.

Call for regulation of cannabis

Stop the Violence BC has launched an education and discussion campaign seeking to improve community safety by broadening the public's understanding of the link between cannabis prohibition and gang violence.

How Not to Protect Community Health and Safety: What the government's own data say about the effects of cannabis prohibition.

How Not to Protect Community Health & Safety:

What the Government's Own Data say about the Effects of Cannabis Prohibition



A report by STOP the VIOLENCE BC

The second report by the Stop the Violence BC Coalition focuses on the impact of drug law enforcement on cannabis availability and the expansion of organized crime in BC. Although increased funding for anti-cannabis law enforcement naturally leads to more cannabis-related arrests and seizures, research shows that these investments do not make cannabis less available or more costly to obtain. Although Canada has seen a 70% increase in the number of cannabis-related arrests annually, from roughly 39,000 in 1990 to more than 65,000 in 2009, this increase in anti-drug law enforcement expenditures has not made cannabis less available to teenagers and young adults in British Columbia. According to the 2009 Canadian Alcohol and Drug Use Monitoring Survey, 27% of BC's youth (aged 15-24) used cannabis at least once in the previous year. The Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey reported that annual cannabis use among Ontario high school students has doubled since the early 1990s, from under 10% in 1991 to over 20% in 2009.

In fact, existing scientific evidence indicates that the enforcing of cannabis prohibition laws does not have a strong bearing on rates of cannabis use.

The prohibition of cannabis has shown several limitations and intended consequences: in the United States, the potency of cannabis has increased and cannabis has become more readily available over the past two decades. At the same time, the cannabis trade's unfettered growth in British Columbia has increased levels of violence, which are directly linked with the massive profits connected to the industry.

How TO better protect community health and safety:

The benefits of legalizing and regulating cannabis for adult use

- **RESTRICTIONS ON PURCHASING AND USE:** A report by the BC Health Officer's Council has called for the regulation of cannabis, among other illegal substances, under a public health model to reduce the unintended health and social harms such as drug-related violence and homicide, that accompany cannabis prohibition. Such a regulatory system could include age restrictions on sales, and could impose restrictions on driving and operating machinery while intoxicated, limits on the hours of sale and outlet density, restricted bulk sales, and limits on the potency of legal cannabis.
- **GOVERNMENT CONTROL OVER PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION:** Conditional licensing systems for medical cannabis dispensaries are based upon adherence to regulatory guidelines, and therefore may be expanded and applied on a larger scale to the regulation and taxation of cannabis. Strict prohibitions on marketing and product branding could also be used to avoid prompting cannabis use, as evidence has confirmed the utility of tamper-proof packaging, standard labeling on content, and factual health warnings for licit substances such as tobacco.
- **TAXATION:** A report by the Fraser Institute has called for the consideration of cannabis regulation and taxation in order to offset the effects of the illegal cannabis industry on negative health and social outcomes. Since taxation (i.e., increasing consumer price) has been shown to affect levels of alcohol and tobacco use, the price of cannabis could also be kept as high as possible to limit use, but low enough to avoid creating an incentive to produce cannabis for an illegal market.
- **AND MORE:** Additional regulatory tools worthy of consideration include policies that restrict the location or circumstances of cannabis use, similar to both tobacco and alcohol regulation, as well as the evolving Dutch coffee shop model for cannabis which is designed to reduce public use.

For the full report please visit <http://stoptheviolencebc.org/2011/12/13/how-not-to-protect-community-health-and-safety/>

A partial listing of Stop the Violence Coalition members

Law enforcement and legal experts

John Anderson, PhD
Former Correctional Officer
Chair, Dept. of Criminology, VIU
Vice President, Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (Canada)

David Bratzer
Police Officer
Board of Directors, Law Enforcement Against Prohibition

Vince Cain
Former Chief Coroner
Former RCMP Chief Superintendent

Ross Lander
Retired Justice, Supreme Court of British Columbia

Walter McKay
Former Police Officer
Consultant, WM Consulting
Founder/Director of International Affairs, Asociacion Mexicana de Reduccion de Riesgos y Danos

Academics

Neil Boyd, PhD
Professor and Associate Director, School of Criminology, SFU

Benedikt Fischer, PhD
Professor & CIHR/PHAC Applied Public Health Chair, Faculty of Health Sciences, SFU
Director, Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addictions

Thomas Kerr, PhD
Associate Professor, Dept. of Medicine, UBC
Director, Urban Health Research Initiative, BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS

Josee Lavoie, PhD
Associate Professor, School of Health Sciences, UNBC
Assistant Professor, Dept. of Community Health Sciences, UManitoba Research Affiliate, Manitoba First Nations Centre for Aboriginal Health Research

Cornelia Zeisser, PhD
Post-doctoral fellow, Centre for Addictions Research BC

Health professionals

Jane Buxton, MBBS, MRCGP, MHSc, FRCPC
Associate Professor, School of Population and Public Health, UBC

John Carsley, MD, MSc, FRCPC
Medical Health Officer

Paul Hasselback, MD, MSc, FRCPC
Medical Health Officer
Clinical Associate Professor, School of Population and Public Health, UBC

Julio Montaner, MD, FRCPC, FCCP, FACP, FRSC
Director, BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS
Immediate Past President, International AIDS Society

Evan Wood, MD, PhD, ABIM, FRCPC
Professor, Dept. of Medicine, UBC
Director, Urban Health Research Initiative, BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS

For a full list of coalition members, please visit: www.stoptheviolencebc.org/about-us

For a copy of the media release, poll data and to arrange interviews, contact:
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