

EXTRACT



'Chicago Drug War Stories': A new look at drug policy in action

Emily Gray Brosious

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What does the War on Drugs mean to Chicagoans?

The "Chicago Drug War Stories" is a new series of short videos documenting how individual Chicagoans perceive and think about the War on Drugs.

Each week, Extract will speak with Chicago residents from different neighborhoods, occupations, socio-economic classes, races, religions, genders and cultures about what the drug war means to them, and how drug use and drug policies have impacted their lives.

Follow along as Extract explores the War on Drugs through the individual experiences,

impressions and opinions of Chicago residents. Check out Extract's YouTube channel, where all the videos will be catalogued for easy viewing.

More about the War on Drugs:

The War on Drugs refers to the United States initiative to stomp out the illegal drug trade and reduce illicit psychoactive drug use through a diverse set of domestic criminal justice policies and international military aid and intervention.

The term is largely attributed to former president Richard Nixon, who dubbed drug abuse "public enemy number one" in 1971 and declared America's "war on drugs."

Since that time, the US has spent more than a trillion dollars fighting the so-called War on Drugs. Those costs have not correlated to declining drug use or illegal drug trade activity. However, they do correlate to a sharp increase in the country's incarceration rates.

In 1971, approximately 200,000 people were incarcerated in state and federal prisons. By 2014, that number had risen to more than 1.5 million, according to a report by the Sentencing Project.

While people of color are no more likely to use or sell illegal drugs than white people, from 1980 to 2007, African-Americans were arrested for drugs at 2.8 to 5.5 times the rate of their white counterparts, as Richard Branson reported by CNN.

Ironically, as the U.S. government has focused intensely on halting illicit drugs, legal prescription drug use has surged rapidly in this country.

Per the Los Angeles Times:

Prescription drug overdoses now claim more lives than heroin and cocaine combined, fueling a doubling of drug-related deaths in the United States over the last decade.

See also:

10 shocking facts about the War on Drugs





Gallery statistics via Drug Sense and Vox.

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