

such as community colleges, technical institutes, skill centers, and other public and private colleges, also offer vocational and technical education.

Reforms made to the Perkins Act in 1998 increased the focus on ensuring that participating students at both the secondary and postsecondary levels acquired academic and technical skills, as well as completed their respective programs and transitioned into successful employment or further education. Some progress has been made as states have created an initial performance accountability system and the focus on academic performance among students participating in vocational and technical education courses has been strengthened.

Today, I am offering the Vocational and Technical Education for the Future Act to build on the 1998 reforms, and ensure vocational and technical education continues to prepare students for whatever they choose to pursue upon graduation. Should a student choose to proceed with postsecondary education, enter the military, or pursue other opportunities, the goal of the Perkins program must be to prepare students with the right combination of academic and technical skills so that they may succeed in whatever path they choose.

The bill I am offering includes a number of reforms designed to enhance achievement and accountability, streamline programs so that states may better utilize federal dollars, and provide model sequence of courses that will enhance vocational and technical education programs and partnerships.

The bill includes important steps to increase accountability, and emphasize continued improvement in student achievement. The bill establishes separate performance indicators for secondary and postsecondary students, improving on current law by recognizing the need for distinct measures to be applied to differing students. The bill also requires states to make continued and substantial improvement in the academic and vocational and technical achievement of students, and establishes incentive grants for states exceeding their own high standards.

To increase accountability and achievement at the local level, the bill requires local programs to establish local adjusted levels of performance similar to current statewide performance level expectations. The Vocational and Technical Education for the Future Act also establishes local improvement plans and permits states to apply sanctions for local recipients that, after receiving technical assistance, fail to show improvement or continually do not meet local adjusted levels of performance.

To better streamline and target federal funding, the bill combines funding for the Tech-Prep and Perkins state grant programs into one program funding stream, and incorporates the activities of Tech-Prep into the basic grant program. This consolidation will increase flexibility for states, streamline funding, and ensure current activities continue to exist while the program as a whole is updated to meet the challenges of the future.

The Vocational and Technical Education for the Future Act includes an important new element that will build upon efforts to coordinate secondary and postsecondary vocational and technical education. The bill requires states to develop model sequences of courses for vocational and technical programs to be used as an option at the local level. These model se-

quences of courses will incorporate both secondary and postsecondary elements, include rigorous and challenging academic and vocational and technical content in a coordinated, non-duplicative progression of courses, and lead to a degree or credential.

Technology and economic competition are combining in ways that are changing the nature of work and are redefining the American workplace. The need for higher literacy, numeracy, communication, and interpersonal skills in the workplace has grown over the past decade and will continue to be an important factor in the workplace in the future. The skills needed to be successful in postsecondary education are similar to the skills that are required by employers. The need for a strong academic and technical background makes it imperative that the current vocational and technical education system adapt in order to provide the knowledge and skills needed to succeed.

The bill I am offering today seeks to meet the challenges of a changing economy and workplace by building upon the current successes of vocational and technical education. Our challenge is to ensure that all vocational and technical education students have access to programs that are sufficiently rigorous in both their academic and technical content, as well as provide clear connections with the education and training beyond high school that most Americans need for continued workplace success. I believe this bill fulfills those high standards, and I am pleased to be offering it today.

THE ARRIVAL OF WILLIAM
ETHERIDGE OTTO

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a joyful heart to announce the birth of my very first grandchild. On January 19, my wife Faye and I welcomed into this world William Etheridge Otto, the new son of our daughter Catherine Etheridge Otto and her husband Tim. William arrived at 9:03 a.m. in Raleigh, North Carolina. He weighs seven pounds and seven ounces and measures 21 inches.

Faye and I are proud as can be of our very first grandchild and his parents. Looking into the face of a newborn baby reaffirms your hope for mankind, your faith in God and your commitment to family. I want my grandson to grow up in a peaceful and prosperous nation, where he can achieve his dreams and is limited only by his willingness to work hard. I want William Etheridge Otto and all children to have good schools, safe neighborhoods and the best medical care. And I hope our national leadership can return to the values of balanced budgets and opportunity for all so that my grandson's generation can reach for the American Dream. Those are North Carolina values. I look forward to teaching William those values throughout his precious life.

A new child in the family is a gift from God. The Etheridge family today is very blessed to welcome our newest addition. I look forward to introducing him to my friends and neighbors.

LEGALIZATION OF ILLICIT DRUGS

HON. MARK E. SOUDER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to call attention to the work of organizations that seek the legalization of illicit drugs in our country, to the detriment of the health and safety of our citizens.

On January 4, 2005, the Washington Post published an article entitled "Exhale, Stage Left," chronicling the career of Keith Stroup, the founder and retiring executive director of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML). This article sheds light on some of the operations and claims of such organizations, and I ask that it be entered into the RECORD.

Particularly disturbing in this story is the entanglement of the drug legalization group with those who stand to profit from others' addiction—drug traffickers. The Washington Post article describes that one of the major early financial backers of NORML was "the legendary pot smuggler" Tom Forcade. To collect donations, Stroup even went to Forcade's "stash house," which was "filled with bales of marijuana." Certainly we can understand why a drug smuggler would contribute generously to efforts to legalize drugs like marijuana—with so much product to move, this man had a vested financial interest in making harmful drugs easier for people to obtain. But what kind of group takes money from such a criminal? Do we really want our laws "reformed" by efforts funded by criminal enterprises? Yet according to the article, it had seemed "perfectly normal for NORML to call a dope smuggler when it ran short of cash."

Drug legalization groups like to claim that marijuana is not really harmful and that it does not serve as a "gateway" to the use of other dangerous drugs. In fact, on its website, NORML claims, "There is no conclusive evidence that the effects of marijuana are causally linked to the subsequent use of other illicit drugs." Perhaps NORML needs to look back at the experiences of its own leaders to re-examine such an assertion. The Post article describes how Stroup and his colleagues themselves moved onto other drugs in the 1970s: "Privately, he and his NORML pals joked about forming an advocacy group for another drug they'd begun to enjoy—cocaine." I'm sure that the families who have suffered through the heartaches of cocaine addiction could inform NORML that cocaine abuse is no laughing matter. Stroup has come to realize that as well, admitting that his own use of cocaine may have led to lapses in professional judgment and that he knows now that "[c]ocaine is deadly." Once, though, he had thought cocaine harmless. If he was wrong about cocaine, might he not likewise be wrong in presuming marijuana harmless?

In an attempt to make marijuana sound "harmless," drug legalization groups also try to downplay the addictive qualities of marijuana. NORML states on its website, "While the scientific community has yet to achieve full consensus on this matter, the majority of epidemiological and animal data demonstrate that the reinforcing properties of marijuana in humans is low in comparison to other drugs of abuse . . ." Yet the leaders of legalization

themselves exhibit not simply social or occasional use of marijuana, but regular consumption of it. According to the article, Stroup smokes pot “nearly every night” as he watches the evening news.

Our citizens—especially our youth—need to understand the real danger of dependence on marijuana. It’s not as innocuous as legalizers would have us believe. As the Office of National Drug Control Policy has reported, “According to the 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 4.3 million Americans were classified with dependence on or abuse of marijuana. That figure represents 1.8 percent of the total U.S. population and 60.3 percent of those classified as individuals who abuse or are dependent on illicit drugs . . . What makes this all the more disturbing is that marijuana use has been shown to be three times more likely to lead to dependence among adolescents than among adults.”

We need to be aware of marijuana’s harms. Last year NIDA Director Nora Volkow testified at a hearing before the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources, which I chair. Dr. Volkow attested to the health risks associated with marijuana, saying, “There are numerous deleterious health consequences associated with short and long-term marijuana use, including the possibility of becoming addicted. During the period of intoxication, marijuana disrupts short-term memory, attention, judgment, as well as other cognitive functions. In addition, marijuana has also been shown to impair coordination and balance, and can increase an individual’s heart rate.” Marijuana, Dr. Volkow testified, can affect the entire body: “New research is also showing us that marijuana can affect almost every organ in the body, from the central nervous system to the cardiovascular, endocrine, respiratory/pulmonary, and immune systems. Because marijuana is typically rolled into a cigarette or ‘joint’ and smoked, it has been shown to greatly impact the respiratory system and increases the likelihood of some cancers.” Marijuana use is connected to lifelong difficulties for our youth: “Also, we are finding that early exposure to marijuana is associated with an increased likelihood of a lifetime of subsequent drug problems.”

With all the risks that marijuana poses, we cannot afford to allow drug legalization groups to perpetuate their myths about the “harmlessness” of marijuana—especially when even their own history casts doubt on the validity of their claims.

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 4, 2005]

EXHALE, STAGE LEFT: AT 61, LONGTIME MARIJUANA LOBBY LEADER KEITH STROUP IS FINALLY LEAVING THE JOINT

(By Peter Carlson)

Keith Stroup’s mouth is dry. His brain is foggy. America’s most famous marijuana lobbyist admits that a powerful drug has messed up his mind.

The drug isn’t marijuana, although he smokes that nearly every night. It’s Tylenol cold medicine. He took some this morning, he says, and it made him feet goofy, spacey, stoned.

“I hate taking it,” he says. “But my nose was running and I kept sneezing and I thought, ‘I gotta take something.’”

Wearing a bright white shirt and dark blue suit, Stroup is sitting at his impeccably neat desk in the tidy K Street offices of NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of

Marijuana Laws. He founded NORML back in 1970 and now, 34 years later, he’s retiring at 61 as the pot lobby’s executive director.

“When I turned 60, I looked in the mirror and I saw this gray-haired old man and I said, ‘I think we need younger leadership,’” he explains. “It has to do with more energy, fresh perspectives, new ideas. It’s not like I’m ready for the old folks’ home. I just think we need somebody younger running the organization.”

That somebody is Allen St. Pierre, 39, who has served as NORML’s second-in-command for the past decade. St. Pierre took over yesterday, while Stroup, who recently got married for the third time, headed off to his Falls Church home to become a consultant and lecturer.

But now, Stroup, stoned on cold medicine and nostalgia, starts showing off the strange souvenirs of his strange lobbying career.

He pulls a black-and-white photo off the wall. It shows him in jeans and a jacket addressing a crowd of hippies in front of the White House in the ’70s.

“We used to have a July 4 smoke-in every year in Lafayette Park,” he says. “I like this just as a period piece. Look at those ragtag folks! Look at the guys without their shirts on!”

He points to a poster on the wall and reads its message aloud: “It’s only a weed that turns to a flower in your mind.” He laughs.

“That’s a period piece, too.”

Decorating his filing cabinet are stickers—“Just Say Yes to Legalization”—and a backstage pass from a Willie Nelson concert. Nelson, famously fond of the weed, is a longtime NORML supporter.

“Over the years, we’ve built up a nice friendship,” Stroup says. “He’s going to sponsor a celebrity NORML golf tournament in 2005.”

Stoned golf?

Stroup laughs. “It’s a lot less competitive,” he says.

He picks up a picture frame that contains a typed letter. It’s the note that accompanied \$10,000 in cash left on the doorstep of NORML’s office in the summer of 1976.

“Officially, it was an anonymous gift,” Stroup says, smiling mischievously, “but I knew who it was.”

The money came from Tom Forcade, the legendary pot smuggler who founded *High Times*, the marijuana magazine, in 1974 and helped bankroll NORML before he committed suicide in 1978. Forcade’s letter claimed the \$10,000 was a donation from “The Confederation,” a fictitious group of dope growers and smugglers. It concluded: “Karma prevails. Venceremos.”

Stroup turned that gift into a media event, calling a news conference and spreading the well-worn \$10 and \$20 bills across a table for photographers.

Today Stroup is a bit embarrassed by that publicity stunt. “It was a little close to the line,” he says. “I was nervous about the whole thing going down, but I played along with it. If I did that today, the FBI and the DEA would have me before a grand jury in no time.”

Back in the ’70s, though, it seemed perfectly normal for NORML to call a dope smuggler when it ran short of cash. One day, Stroup recalls, he called Forcade for a donation and the smuggler told him to come to an address on New York’s Lower East Side.

“I got up there and it’s an apartment with no electricity,” he says, “and I walk in the door and the whole room is filled with bales of marijuana! It was a stash house! And I’m saying, ‘Forcade, what are you doing? I don’t know if I’m being followed.’ But we needed the money and I took the money.”

There was a time, back in the ’70s, when Keith Stroup was about as close to a rock star as Washington lobbyists ever get.

He hung out with the Allman Brothers and Jimmy Buffett. He parted with Willie Nelson and presidential son Chip Carter. He had sex in the fabled grotto at the Playboy mansion, where Hugh Hefner hosted a NORML fundraiser.

The man they called “Mr. Marijuana” grew up on a farm in southern Illinois. His mother was a devout Baptist. His father was a building contractor and Republican Party activist who stashed a bottle of whiskey under the front seat of his Lincoln Continental so he could take a snort when his wife wasn’t looking.

Stroup graduated from the University of Illinois in 1965—after a one-year expulsion for drunken frat boy high jinks—and headed for Washington. He enrolled in Georgetown Law School and, using his dad’s GOP connections, landed a \$50-a-week job in the office of Sen. Everett Dirksen of Illinois. The work was dull, but it gave Stroup a taste for Capitol Hill wheeling and dealing.

Meanwhile he’d begun smoking pot and marching in antiwar demonstrations, sometimes simultaneously.

He finished law school in 1968, got married and took a job on the newly formed federal Commission on Product Safety. That job put Stroup in contact with Ralph Nader, then a hot young consumer advocate.

Inspired by Nader’s work, Stroup got an idea: He’d create a consumer group for pot smokers, an organization to lobby for legalization. It was the kind of pipe dream that floated through the heads of countless pot smokers during long nights of deep inhaling, but Stroup actually did it—hustling \$5,000 in seed money from the Playboy Foundation and opening an office in his basement near Dupont Circle.

“Keith was a rebel, and he resented the idea that his government treated him as a criminal because of a drug that he and millions of other people used,” says Patrick Anderson, author of “High in America,” a 1981 book on Stroup and NORML.

Stroup didn’t dress like a rebel, though. He wore a suit and tie, like every other Washington lawyer-lobbyist.

“He was consciously trying to be an alternative to the freak approach, which he knew wasn’t going to work,” Anderson says.

Courting respectability, Stroup assembled a board of directors that included Harvard professors, former attorney general Ramsey Clark and, later, Sens. Phil Hart and Jacob Javits. Pumped with zeal, Stroup went anywhere to make his pitch, appearing on TV, lecturing at colleges, testifying before Congress and state legislatures.

In 1972, Stroup got unexpected help from an unlikely source: The National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse, appointed by President Nixon, issued its final report, concluding that marijuana is relatively harmless and that possession of less than an ounce should be legal. Nixon rejected the report, but Stroup used it as a lobbying tool in his increasingly successful campaign to reduce penalties for pot.

In 1975, five states—Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine and Ohio—removed criminal penalties for possession of small amounts of the weed. In 1976, Jimmy Carter, who during his campaign had advocated decriminalizing pot, was elected president. In 1977, Stroup visited the White House to meet with Carter’s drug policy adviser, Peter Bourne. Soon NORML would be playing the White House in softball.

It seemed like high times for NORML. Publicly, Stroup predicted that pot would be legal in a couple of years. Privately, he and his NORML pals joked about forming an advocacy group for another drug they’d begun to enjoy—cocaine.

Then Stroup hit a couple of snags. In October 1977, Canadian customs agents found a

joint in Stroup's pocket and busted him. That wasn't too bad: Canada had liberal pot laws and when Stroup returned for trial in 1978, the judge let him off with a \$100 fine.

But at the airport on his way home, Canadian customs agents searched his bags and found a joint and a vial containing traces of cocaine. Busted again, he spent the night in jail, was fined \$300 and got kicked out of Canada. The whole absurd episode was like a bad joke.

How can you tell if you might be a little too stoned?

You get busted going through customs with dope after your trial for going through customs with dope.

That was a dumb blunder. But Stroup was about to make a blunder that was infinitely dumber.

Back in Washington, he was lobbying for a bill to ban Federal funding of a controversial program that sprayed Mexican marijuana fields with the herbicide paraquat, shown to cause lung damage in people who smoked the tainted weed. Stroup asked Bourne, Carter's drug adviser, to support the bill. Bourne refused. Stroup was outraged. To him, it was a moral issue: The feds were deliberately poisoning pot smokers! Seeking revenge, Stroup leaked a secret to newspaper columnist Jack Anderson in July 1978: Bourne had snorted cocaine at NORML's 1977 Christmas party. And Stroup revealed the names of a couple of witnesses.

When Anderson broke the story, Bourne told reporters he'd only handled cocaine at the NORML party, he hadn't actually snorted any. It didn't matter, Bourne lost his job.

A few months later, so did Stroup. The folks at NORML didn't like snitches and eased him out the door.

"When I look back on it," Stroup says now, "it was probably the stupidest thing I ever did."

Nobody "in their rational mind," he adds, would jeopardize a relationship with a high White House official over a minor policy dispute.

Is it possible that he wasn't in his "rational mind" because he was too stoned too often?

"Yes," he says. "I think it is possible that my own personal use of cocaine played into that."

In those days he, like many people, thought coke was harmless. Now he knows better. "Cocaine is deadly," he says. "There are probably people who can use cocaine moderately. But I gotta tell you: Based on me and my friends, I didn't see very many of them."

After leaving NORML in 1979, Stroup spent four years as a defense attorney. "Every client I had was a drug offender," he says. "The only people who'd heard of me had been arrested on drug charges."

Unfortunately they weren't the kind of drug offenders he liked—folks who'd been caught with a little weed. They were mostly cocaine smugglers and, he soon realized, a lot of them were thugs.

"So I stepped aside," he says, "and went back into public-interest work."

Stroup, who had divorced in the early '70s, married a television producer and moved to Boston, where he became a lobbyist for the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities.

In 1986 he moved back to Washington to lobby for a family farm organization. In 1989 he became executive director of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. In 1994 he became a lobbyist for the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives, an Alexandria-based prison reform group.

Then in 1995, NORML—split by infighting—asked Stroup to come back and run the place.

He returned to find that everything had changed. The movement to legalize marijuana had run aground. In the 1970s, 11 states had decriminalized pot; in the '80s, none did. Nancy Reagan's "Just say no" crusade and the deadly spread of crack cocaine had led to a backlash against drugs. And NORML was nearly broke, politically impotent and beset by feuding factions.

Stroup saved NORML from self-destruction, St. Pierre says, but he failed to bring back the glory days: "Keith could not replicate what he did in the '70s."

Part of Stroup's problem was competition. In the '90s, two new groups arose to advocate drug-law reform, each bankrolled by an eccentric billionaire. The Drug Policy Alliance is funded by financier George Soros. The Marijuana Policy Project, founded by former NORML staffer Rob Kampia, is funded by insurance mogul Peter Lewis. Both groups have spent millions on state referendums to legalize medical marijuana—many successful, some not.

But Stroup has failed to find an eccentric billionaire sugar daddy for NORML.

"I wish we had that kind of funding," he says. "If I had the kind of funding that Kampia has, I think I could have done a lot more with it than he has."

Now NORML limps by on about \$750,000 a year, most of it raised from dues paid by about 12,000 members. It's not enough money to do much politicking, so NORML is now largely a service organization for pot smokers, providing tips on beating drug tests and legal advice for arrested smokers.

Over the past year money was so tight that Stroup laid off two staffers and stopped collecting his \$75,000-a-year salary for two months.

"I view NORML as a small and shrinking dinosaur," Kampia says. "NORML's time has come and gone."

Tom Riley, official spokesman for federal drug czar John Walters, agrees. "Keith and people like that have banged their heads against the wall for years saying 'Legalize pot.' But they're farther behind now than they were 20 years ago."

Riley says Stroup's career reminds him of a line from the movie "The Big Lebowski": "The '60s are over, Lebowski. The bums lost. My condolences."

"I have no doubt I'll be smoking marijuana the day I die," Stroup says.

He loves the weed. He smokes it nearly every night. He comes home from work, pours a glass of chardonnay, lights up a joint and turns on the TV news.

He does not smoke pot when he has to work or drive, he says, because, as the movies of stoner comedians Cheech and Chong prove, pot can make you stupid.

"I learned a long time ago that some of those Cheech and Chong jokes are very real," he says. "If you're in a social setting and you're smoking marijuana, there are going to be a lot of those Cheech and Chong situations, where you feel real strongly about something and you start a conversation and about halfway through you forget what the point was." He laughs. "But that's only when you're stoned. Four hours later, you don't have that."

His new wife doesn't share his passion for pot. Neither does his 35-year-old daughter, who recently had a baby boy, making Stroup a grandfather. He doesn't care that they don't smoke pot and he doesn't think anybody should care that he does smoke it. Forty years of serious inhaling, he claims, hasn't harmed his body or his mind.

"There's absolutely nothing wrong with it," he says, "and it should be of no interest or concern to the government."

Despite his candor on the topic, Stroup hasn't been busted since his Canadian mis-

adventures. But he knows the government and its drug war are always out there, and that can make a guy paranoid. About a year ago, the feds nearly discovered Stroup's stash in a suitcase he'd checked on a plane.

"I had a few joints in an airtight thing inside a sock so you couldn't see it," he says. "I got back home and opened it up and there was this slip saying, 'We opened your bag, blah, blah blah.' And my weed is a few inches away! I said, 'Man, that was too close!' So I no longer carry anything when I'm flying. If I'm going to be someplace for a few days, I ship myself a 'care package.'"

The next day Stroup calls, leaves a message on the voice mail. "Man, I was totally goofy yesterday on that cold medicine," he says. "I hope I wasn't totally goofy in my responses. . . . I should have better sense than to do an interview when I'm stoned out of my mind on cold medicine."

HONORING DEPARTING U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PAGES

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, the end of this week marks the completion of our first semester for the Page academic year and thus several of our House Pages will be leaving us. At the completion of my remarks, I am submitting a list of names of those pages that will be departing for home in the next few days.

Not only do I want to note the participation and service of these fine young people, but as the Chairman of the House Page Board, I want to thank them for their service and commitment to this Institution. They have served with distinction and should be commended for their contributions. They and their fellow classmates have served during a time of great historic events that have included the final weeks of session of the 108th Congress, Presidential and Congressional elections, the Opening of the 109th Congress, the meeting of the Electoral College and last week's Inauguration of President Bush. As well, this class have distinguished themselves through their public service and their fund raising for the Red Cross to help the victims of the recent Tsunami.

We are proud of you and wish you only the best in your future endeavors. Thank you.

2004 FALL SEMESTER PAGES

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