



Law Enforcement Against Prohibition  
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# Patrick Heintz

Retired Counselor/Corrections Officer  
Agawam, MA

*“Sociologically, there will always be deviations from the norm including substance abuse, but they cannot be legislated or enforced away.”*

With experience in both corrections and substance abuse counseling, Patrick Heintz has worked with incarcerated populations for over 20 years. Beginning as a child care worker in a maximum security Department of Youth Services facility, he spent the majority of his career at the Hampden County Sheriff's Department as a counselor/corrections officer.

As a substance abuse counselor licensed by the State of Massachusetts working in a variety of corrections settings, he was witness to what he calls the “revolving door and intergenerational nature of the offender population”. Patrick explains, “Early on in my career, it became apparent that to a large extent, this revolving door phenomenon was a direct result of the prevailing laws associated with the war on drugs. It became a daily frustration that no matter how service-oriented and well intentioned treatment attempts were in a corrections setting, nonsensical drug laws such as mandatory minimum sentencing, school zone violations and other punitive consequences of drug arrests kept us from being optimally effective.”

As a human service worker in corrections, it was obvious to Patrick that substance abusing and addictive personality disorders were more mental health issues than a law and order problem. He experienced an avalanche of realizations upon first hearing a LEAP presentation where the speaker pointed out that after 40 years of being at war with drugs, the percentage of the population abusing drugs remains at approximately the same level as in 1971, when the war on drugs began. Patrick contends that “Sociologically there will always be deviations from the norm including substance abuse, but they cannot be legislated or enforced away.”

Patrick joined LEAP in 2011. He is an avid golfer.

The War on Drugs is a hot and timely topic that is drawing more and more attention. Find out why so many law enforcers support replacing the war on drugs with legalization and regulation. Book a LEAP speaker for your next meeting, debate, or educational event.

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