

From: Drug Policy Alliance <actionfeedback@drugpolicy.org>
Sent: Saturday, May 6, 2023 10:18 AM
To: #DIGITAL TEAM
Subject: Top Story: Dangerous HALT Fentanyl Bill Set for House Vote



DPA 2023 Newsletter: Issue 2

Registration Has Opened for the 2023 International Drug Policy Reform Conference!

Registration is open for [the International Drug Policy Reform Conference](#). The conference is October 18-21, 2023, in Phoenix, Arizona. This is the world's premier gathering of people who are working to end the drug war. [Register now for the early bird rate!](#)

Attendees will spend three days building community with allies. Session will be given by leading experts from around the world. More than 1,200 attendees joined us at our last conference. They represented more than 50 countries. [Don't miss out on this transformative event. Register to join us!](#)

We have two Scholarships Programs. These programs support people directly impacted by the war on drugs. They help ensure that the diversity of our movement is reflected in our conference attendees. [Learn more about the available scholarships here.](#)

[Learn more](#)

Dangerous HALT Fentanyl Bill Set for House Vote

The U.S. House is expected to vote on the HALT Fentanyl Act this month. This

legislation would increase mandatory minimum sentences for fentanyl analogues. It would also permanently place fentanyl-related substances on Schedule I. It would not require first testing them for benefits or harm.

DPA is leading the charge to prevent the passage of the HALT Fentanyl Act. We know that criminalization has failed to keep our communities safe. Increased penalties only put more lives at risk. To save lives, we must prioritize a health approach to fentanyl and the overdose crisis.

“We all want to turn the tide on the overdose crisis. It has already claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of our friends, family members, and neighbors,” said [Maritza Perez Medina](#), director of DPA’s Office of Federal Affairs. “But increasing drug war criminalization is a disproven, failed strategy.”

“By voting in favor of a version of the HALT Fentanyl Act that doubles down on mandatory minimums, proponents of permanent class-wide scheduling are showing their true colors,” Medina Perez said. “The goal is not to address the overdose crisis and keep people alive. The goal is to grandstand using ‘tough-on-crime’ rhetoric of the past to control communities and provide a false sense of safety. This approach is counterproductive to addressing the issue of overdose. And it will continue to disproportionately impact Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities because of targeted enforcement and oversurveillance.”

We know that crackdowns on prescription opioids and heroin don't work. They created the conditions for fentanyl to flourish and overtake the drug supply. If the Biden Administration follows that same approach with fentanyl, newer and potentially more harmful substances will begin overtaking the market. We are already beginning to see that with the rise of xylazine. The Biden Administration has now [designated it as an emerging threat](#).

Take action: tell your U.S. Representative to vote NO on the HALT Fentanyl Act

[DPA Leads 4/20 Advocacy to Federally Deschedule Marijuana](#)

To mark 4/20, DPA led [a public sign-on letter](#) – alongside the ACLU, Human Rights Watch, and other prominent signatories. The letter urged the Biden Administration to support passage of legislation to federally deschedule marijuana. It also called on the Administration to repair the past harms of prohibition through executive branch actions.

There was another reason to celebrate on 4/20. The [Marijuana Justice Coalition](#) received The Community Changemaker Award. It was presented at the National Cannabis Festival Policy Forum. DPA leads the Marijuana Justice Coalition. It includes allies like the Center for American Progress and the National Association of Social Workers. We were bestowed this award in recognition of our work that led to [the MORE Act](#) being passed by the U.S. House of Representatives last year. The MORE Act would deschedule marijuana federally.

DPA has a long and successful history advancing marijuana legalization. We had a hand in the vast majority of state victories over the past 11 years. We even helped Uruguay end prohibition and develop a regulatory framework in 2012.

Today, marijuana is legal for adult use in more than 20 states. The vast majority of Americans supports legalization. So much has changed since we began this work. But one aspect remains the same. The U.S. government is still not listening to the will of the people. As a result, our communities continue to be harmed by marijuana prohibition.

Marijuana is still illegal federally. In 2021, more than 170,000 people were arrested for marijuana possession. Because of targeted policing, 4 out of 5 of those sentenced for federal marijuana charges were Black or Latinx.

At DPA, we're fighting to legalize marijuana the right way. We're advocating to legalize marijuana with a focus on health, justice, equity, and community reinvestment. It's not just about freeing the plant. It is also about freeing the people.

[*Read DPA's letter to the Biden Administration.*](#)

DPA Clips, Podcasts, and Stories

[**FEATURED POST: NEW BOOK - WHITEOUT**](#)

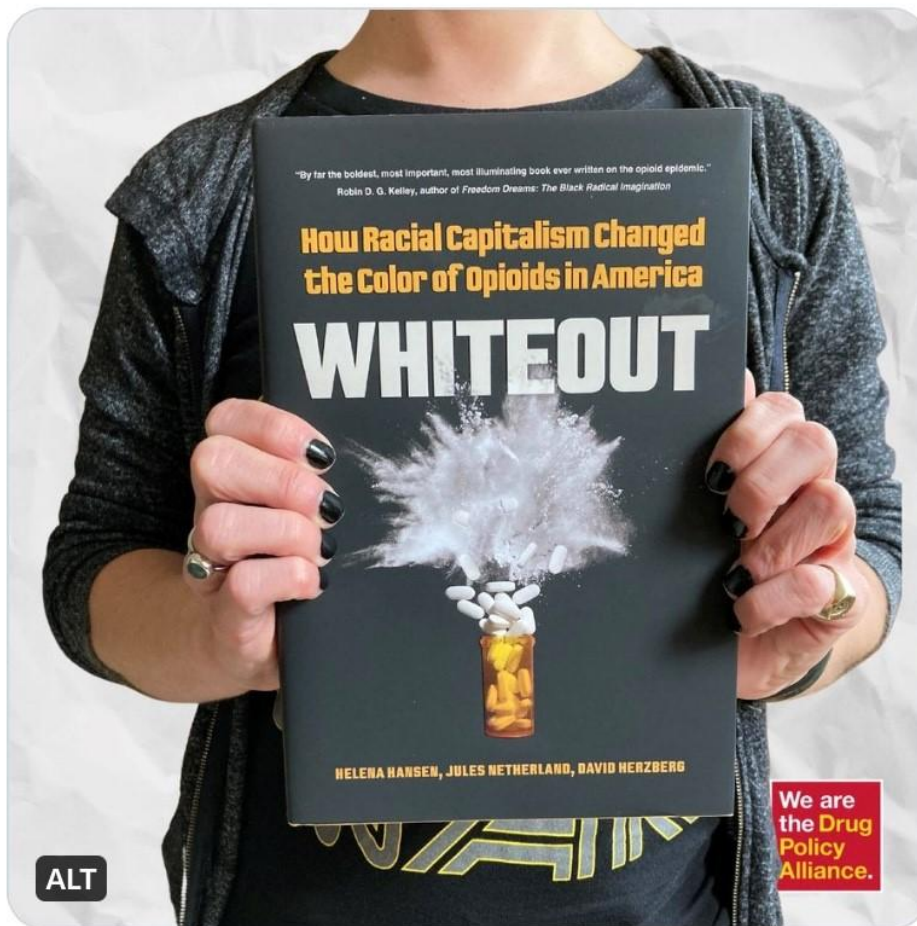


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Check out, *Whiteout: How Racial Capitalism Changed the Color of Opioids in America*. This new book is co-authored by DPA Managing Director of Research and Academic Engagement Jules Netherland, DPA Board Member Helena Hansen, and DPA partner David Herzberg. ucpress.edu/book/978052038..



Whiteout: How Racial Capitalism Changed the Color of Opioids in America traces how white privilege and a century of structural racism in drug policy and in profit-oriented medical industries helped create the

overdose crisis. Using compelling first-person narratives and interviews, it shows how racial capitalism and U.S. drug policy is toxic for all Americans. This book is co-authored by DPA Managing Director of Research and Academic Engagement [Jules Netherland](#), DPA Board Member [Helena Hansen](#), and DPA partner David Herzberg.

[See the tweet here.](#)

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[**New Research Shows Early Successes of Oregon Decriminalization**](#)

In November 2020, Oregon voters approved Measure 110. It decriminalized possession of small quantities of all drugs. It was a first in the United States. It also allocated hundreds of millions of dollars annually to health services for people who use drugs.

To explore the impact of this policy, Drug Science, Policy, and Law published “Decriminalization of drug possession in Oregon: Analysis and early lessons.” It is the first peer-reviewed paper on the topic. The journal article was researched and written by DPA staff and allies. It analyzes the provisions of Measure 110. It examines its early impacts, successes, and challenges. And it outlines lessons that jurisdictions contemplating decriminalizing drug possession should consider.

[***Read the paper here.***](#)

[**SAFE Banking Act Reintroduced in Congress**](#)

In late April, the Secure and Fair Enforcement Act, or “SAFE Banking Act,” was reintroduced in the U.S. House and Senate. The bill would allow banks to offer financial services to state-licensed marijuana and

hemp businesses. Some financial institutions currently provide limited services to marijuana-related businesses, such as checking accounts. But many do not offer their full range of services due to potential federal enforcement.

The lack of access to commercial loans particularly harms small and minority-owned marijuana businesses. Given the existing racial disparities in the banking industry, coupled with the continued federal criminalization of marijuana, Black and brown-owned marijuana businesses will likely face exacerbated challenges towards securing access to financial services. This creates considerable challenges in these businesses being able to compete with large, predominantly white-owned multi-state operators in the marijuana industry.

For several years, DPA has educated policymakers and provided drafting support to allies on the SAFE Banking Act. We have worked to ensure that the legislation prioritizes equity, and offers the fair, just access to financial services that our communities deserve.

[Learn more about the SAFE Banking Act.](#)

[The War on Drugs – a New Podcast from Lava for Good](#)

Award-winning multimedia platform Lava for Good has finished releasing a new 10-episode podcast series, “The War on Drugs.” The podcast is hosted by comedian Clayton English and Greg Glod. Glod is the senior criminal justice policy fellow for Americans for Prosperity and Advisor to Stand Together on Criminal Justice and Drug Reform.

The podcast examines the true cost of five decades of the drug war. Special guests, including diverse subject matter experts, peel back the surface of this complicated period of U.S. history. They show how the war on drugs has fueled incarceration, exacerbated addiction, and hampered economic progress.

[Learn more and tune in here.](#)

Drug Policy in the News

TIME: [OnPoint's Sam Rivera Named in TIME's 100 Most Influential People of 2023](#)

New York Times: [Opinion: New Approaches to the Drug Overdose Crisis](#)

Filter: [Breonna Taylor Died Three Years Ago. Police Power Is Still Unchecked.](#)

Filter: [Why We Should Abandon the Term "Black Market"](#)

Austin American-Statesman: [Opinion: Operation Lone Star is Drug War Déjà Vu](#)

LA Times: [Editorial: Haven't we learned yet? Harsher penalties won't save us from fentanyl](#)

New York Times: [This Is What Neuroscientists and Philosophers Understand About Addiction](#)

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