

The Middle of the Beginning of the End

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President Biden's decision to pardon everyone federally convicted for a simple marijuana possession is not the true beginning of the end of the federal war on drug-taking people.

In 2018, the federal government legalized certain products with cannabinoids derived from hemp. That's something, even if the feds still ban buying and selling marijuana.

On the other hand, for years many states have been legalizing pot, inspiring the federal government to somewhat slacken enforcement of its own pot ban — sometimes.

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These developments constitute the beginning of the end for the federal war on drug-taking people.

Call Biden's gesture the middle of the beginning. That it won't be rapidly followed by full federal legalization of unapproved drugs or even marijuana is shown by the objections of other politicians.



Senator Tom Cotton laments that Biden is “giving blanket pardons to pot heads — many of whom pled down from more serious charges.”*

The argument would be equally valid if it were illegal to blow soap bubbles and some people had pled down from a charge of smashing windows to a charge of blowing soap bubbles. Granted, plea deals are often horrible, wrongly abetting the guilty and hurting the innocent. So reform the plea-deal regime.

But don't criminalize non-crimes.

The real impact? The White House admits that “while no-one is currently in prison for ‘simple possession,’ a pardon for those who have convictions could allow better access to housing or employment.”

Call it a half-start at the middle of the beginning of the end.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.

* Another lament is that Biden's pardon is just cynical election-eve politics. Well . . . let's have more such pandering to the people; it seems the only way to get good policy from bad politicians.