

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 1, 2006, 7:44 PM

Overwhelming Majority of UT Students Urge Administrators to Reduce Penalties for Marijuana Use

Contact:

Judie Niskala, UT Campus Coordinator for SAFER Texas (512) 496-1620
Ann del Llano, SAFER Texas Coordinator (512) 587-6438

UT Austin – A referendum calling on the University to equalize penalties for student use and possession of alcohol and marijuana has passed by 64.4%. Election Supervisory Chair Danforth Dougherty announced results of the election moments ago on campus at the UTC Room 2.112A. The following is the text of the non-binding referendum passed by the student body during campus-wide elections held yesterday and today:

Should the university-imposed penalties for the use and possession of marijuana be no greater than the penalties currently imposed by the university for the use and possession of alcohol on campus?

"This victory demonstrates that students clearly recognize the truth: Alcohol is simply more harmful -- both to the user and to society -- than marijuana," said Judie Niskala, UT Campus Coordinator for SAFER Texas, "Not surprisingly, given this truth, they agree it does not make sense to punish an individual more harshly for using the less harmful substance."

"We, the students, have spoken," said Ms. Niskala, "This is a perfect opportunity to find out if the new student representative on the Board of Regents is going to represent the will of the students or not. The University should have one clear priority: the safety of the students. Because marijuana is less harmful than alcohol, this safety issue should be the University's primary concern. It is time for the University to change its policies so that it no longer encourages students to choose alcohol over marijuana."

Students who support the Alcohol-Marijuana Equalization Referendum have demonstrated an understanding that alcohol is more toxic, more addictive, and almost infinitely more likely to be the direct cause of death than marijuana. Approximately 20,000 Americans die annually from alcohol overdose or chronic use. The comparable figure for marijuana: ZERO. Alcohol increases the likelihood of domestic abuse, sexual assault, and other acts of violence. Marijuana does not.

For more information, please see:

www.SAFERTexas.info

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