

A Few minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

Is the war on seatbelts a failure...and how about the War on Drugs?

A two-part opinion piece

The James Madison University put out a fact sheet on seatbelts. Here's just a few of the facts:

- Approximately 35,000 people die in motor vehicle crashes each year. About 50 percent (17,000) of these people could be saved if they wore their seat belts.
- More than 90 percent of all motorists believe safety belts are a good idea, but less than 14 percent actually use them.
- For every one percent increase in safety belt use, 172 lives and close to \$100 million in annual injury and death costs could be saved.
- Safety belts when used properly reduce the number of serious traffic injuries by 50 percent and fatalities by 60-70 percent.
- Of every 100 children who die in motor vehicle crashes at least 80 would survive if they were properly secured in an approved child safety seat or safety belts.
- Three out of four families with child safety seats fail to use them correctly. Adults need to follow manufacturer's instructions and secure seats properly before every trip.
- An estimated 80 percent of American children are immunized against contagious diseases, but less than 10 percent are properly restrained when riding in a motor vehicle.

There are more statistics, but it shows that enforcement of safety belts may not be working. People just don't seem to want to use them.

About 35,000 people die in vehicle crashes every year and half could be prevented if people wore the belt or wore them correctly. Seatbelts may have saved 240,000 lives but many people die by not wearing them.

Thirty states have primary seatbelt laws that ticket people who don't wear them. Twenty other states have secondary seatbelt laws where you have to stop someone for something else in order to write a seatbelt ticket. But another site, OpEd News says this:

Restrained (wearing seat belt)

2002 deaths: 12,719

2006 deaths: 12,874

Unrestrained (not wearing seat belt)

2002 deaths: 18,269

2006 deaths: 16,037

Source: NCSA, FARS 2002-2005 (Final) 2006

So it looks like seatbelt laws could be failing. The War on Not Wearing Seatbelts and getting tickets is a failure. Almost as many people wearing seatbelts die in accidents, as does those who buckle up. But maybe it's all about **who** is providing those stats.

Did you know (of course you did) that there are attorneys and law firms who are strictly seatbelt attorneys? There is a spin everywhere. Regardless of the fact, there is cash to be made and somebody will surely make it.

The reality is even with seatbelts that are known lifesavers, some people, for whatever reason, will find fault with wearing them. But with seatbelt non-compliance, the only people affected by it are you or your kids if you choose not to comply, unlike the issue which we will be discussing here on drugs. Dope, and its enforcement, unlike seatbelt compliance, affects us all in society.

Here is the point. Recently the Cook County Commissioner, Toni Preckwinkle, speaking at a Chicago rally, declared the 40-year USA "War on Drugs" a failure. How she qualifies to make this declaration, I don't know.

Yep, all you narcotic cops, street cops, supervisors, detectives, DEA agents, ATF groups, drug prosecutors, and affiliated judges have **failed** your mission. You should be ashamed. If Toni says it, it's got to be true.

But so does the Reverend Jesse. He was on a local news station a while back expressing the same views to a fawning and cooing gaggle of reporters. If Jesse says so, it must be true.

The new Chicago Police Superintendent Gary McCarthy said he understood the concerns of organizers and activists who oppose drug laws. Gee, political correctness hit the bottom here. "It's an issue of mass incarceration. And law enforcement has gotten this wrong. Narcotics use is a criminalized social issue. It causes crime. Drug dealers get into violent disputes over turf. It's about money."

He thinks law enforcement has this all wrong. Narcotics is not the crime, it's the cause of crime. Okay. So if you want sex and rape a woman, is it the desire for sex that is the crime and not the rape? The desire causes the will to have sex, and if you rape someone, blame the drive? Saltpeter, anyone?

Or if you burglarize a house because you want the flat screen, what caused that? Because you need money for drugs? Because you're poor? Or you never got anything from your dad? Or as one father told me many years ago after I arrested his kid for stealing 20 bikes, "I can't afford to buy him one, so I look the other way." Okay, I said you looked away at one, what about the other 19? No answer here, but I think it was the kid's desire to start his own chop shop franchise that caused him to steal the bikes. This is most certainly about money, too.

Yeah, I know I am being facetious here, but really, the War on Drugs is a failure because people **want** to take drugs. Partly, but a closer look shows the mass incarceration thingee. Too many people take drugs **and get caught!** When they do, they go to jail—at least for a little while.

Stay safe.
Vita é Bella

Part II next time