

The Dope Problem in North Carolina

by Julian Sereno

Marijuana is now legal for recreational use in nine states and the District of Columbia, including the entire Pacific coast—California, Oregon, Washington and Alaska. For medical use, it is legal in 30 states plus D.C. That means that pot is illegal in less than half the states.

Public opinion polls favoring pot have swung dramatically since Y2K. Now a growing majority of Americans favor legalization, 61 percent according to a Pew Research Center report released in January. In 2001 it was 31 percent.

Among the states where pot is legal are economic powerhouses: California, with 40 million inhabitants a 2.5 trillion dollar GDP, has by far the largest economy in the U.S. Washington, Colorado, and Massachusetts all boast robust high-tech economies.

Marijuana opponents have always argued that it is gateway drug to lethal forms of dope, such as cocaine, methamphetamine and

heroin. U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions makes that very argument.

Medical marijuana, they claim, merely opens the door to recreational marijuana. In that they may be right. The states that legalized medical marijuana first are the same ones to legalize recreational marijuana first. That might be because they have the most experience with weed, and none of the dire predictions of the naysayers came true.

Business is booming in everywhere recreational marijuana is legal, without any increase in traffic accidents, crime or any other social pathologies.

North Carolina is among the minority 20 states where marijuana remains illegal. North Carolina has always been socially conservative. A recent Elon University survey found 51 percent of N.C. voters oppose the legalization of marijuana for recreational use, compared to 45 percent who support it. The same survey also found that a whopping 80 percent of those

asked approve of the legalization of marijuana for medical use.

Bills legalizing medical marijuana have been introduced in both chambers of the North Carolina Legislature this year, but they did not emerge from committee in either the House or Senate. The demographic group most opposed to marijuana legalization are older Republican men; and that's who has the power in North Carolina in Spring 2018.

They worry that any legal acceptance will lead to more widespread use, and then who knows what. Gateway drug and all that.

While our legislators are commendably concerned about the well being of the citizenry, they were asleep at the switch when the real killer—opioids—sauntered through the gateway in the finest legal and medical clothing money can buy.

There probably wasn't much the NC Legislature could have done. It was the U.S. Congress that accepted huge campaign contributions

(read bribes) from Big Pharma and their lobbyists. It was they that turned a blind eye to the explosion in the prescribing of opiates, and subsequently in their manufacture. Widespread addiction has followed, and mortality rates have spiked.

It doesn't seem to matter whether or not a state has legalized medical or recreational marijuana or not, opioid addiction is everywhere.

More than 12,000 North Carolinians have died from opioid overdoses between 1999 and 2016. That's about three a day. In Chatham County, Sheriff Mike Roberson called it the number one law enforcement issue facing the county.

The real dope problem, in North Carolina and throughout the United States, are the dopes that hold elective office.

Julian Sereno is editor and publisher of Chatham County Line.

Disparities and Discrimination

by Don Lein

In his new book, *Discrimination and Disparities*, Dr. Thomas Sowell explores disparities in peoples/races, genders and family members and how well they are attributable to discrimination. He provides many examples of skewed distributions, which he characterizes as normal. However, political parties of various persuasions have flawed perceptions of what "normal" outcomes should be. Even the Supreme Court of the United States has embraced this approach when "disparate impact" statistics, showing different outcomes for different groups, have been enough to create a presumption of discrimination. In the past these same statistical disparities have promoted genetic determinism from which came eugenics and laws forbidding inter-racial marriages, and, of course, the holocaust.

As usual, Sowell relies heavily upon empirical evidence. Firstly, he looks at a variety of disparities, starting with human IQs. One would assume that children born and raised in the same household would have similar IQs, with the highest occurring randomly amongst the siblings. Alas, data from Britain, Germany and the United States showed that the first-born average IQs were higher than their younger siblings, with subsequent siblings scoring higher than those who followed. Similar results were found in mental tests for military service in Norway and the Netherlands. The sample sizes ranged into the hundreds of thousands.

These birth order differences persist as people mature, with first-borns being over-represented in members of Congress as well as lawyers in the greater Boston area. Of the 29 original Apollo astronauts, who put a man on the moon, 22 were either

first-born or an only child. Children of parents with professional occupations have been found to hear 2,100 words per hour, while children from working class families hear 1,200 and children from families on welfare hear 600. Other studies suggest there are also qualitative differences in the manner of parent-child interactions in different social classes. People from different social backgrounds may also have different goals and priorities—questioning the assumption that everyone is equally striving to move up.

What do all these highly skewed distributions of outcomes throughout the world mean? There are no automatic equal outcomes in nature nor among human beings. Instead, grossly unequal distributions of outcomes are common, where neither genes nor discrimination are involved. Sowell cites the most tenable conclusion from economic historian, David S. Landes, "The world has never been a level playing field." Why is this so? Geography is one answer, to wit "coastal people have long tended to be more prosperous/advanced than inlanders", or "people in river valleys tend to be more advanced than those in the mountains". Similarly, areas that are near the sea and in temperate zones have 8 percent of the world's inhabited land area, 23 percent of the world's population, and 53 percent of the world's Gross Domestic Product. Neither genes nor discrimination can account for these disparities.

Two of the great catastrophes of the 20th century—Nazism and Communism were based upon the mindset of equal outcomes, which ultimately resulted in the slaughter of millions of human beings. Sowell laments the fact that each of these "isms" had a testable hypothesis, but they were so politically popular with their respective voting blocs, testing was not

necessary nor undertaken. In the first instance, under Nazi rule, Jews were declared genetically inferior and to ensure Nordic purity were exterminated or imprisoned. The Eugenics movement in the U.S. headed by Margaret Sanger advocated that blacks and other inferior races be treated as "weeds", which led to their placing Planned Parenthood clinics in or near neighborhoods/ghettos where the "weeds" lived—thus facilitating abortions.

While Sanger and her fellow eugenics leaders had some success, their approach was nowhere near as successful as Karl Marx and the communist leaders. Hitler's "success" lasted only a couple of decades and only a few million people were killed in that cause. Marx's cause has claimed many millions of casualties throughout the world. The simplicity of the message—"rid the world of the exploiters who are responsible for the poverty of the exploited" was marketing genius which has resonated for over a century and a half. The appeal to envy has made unnecessary any need to test the basic hypothesis of communism. Despite its record, it still attracts followers, the "sizzle still sells" see Venezuela and Cuba.

The blame game in its many manifestations is easy to understand, but does it stand up to rigorous analysis? Does every "My ox has been gored" need to be followed by mob action/anarchy? As a society shouldn't we demand that there be a rigorous and scientific examination of the facts? Namely, is it discrimination or merely another case of a natural disparity. More on that question next month.

Don Lein is a regular contributor to Chatham County Line. A Chatham resident, he is involved in a variety of civic organizations.

Immigration and Cultural Preservation

by Jeff Davidson

Roughly 61 million immigrants currently reside in the U.S. including their American-born children. Based on the latest analysis of U.S. Census data, of that total, about 15.7 million are here illegally. Population and immigration researcher Steven Camarota notes, "These numbers raise profound questions that are seldom asked:

- What number of immigrants can be assimilated?
- What is the absorption capacity of our schools, health care system, infrastructure, and labor market?
- What is the effect on the environment and quality of life from significantly increasing the nation's population density?"

"With 45 million legal immigrants and their young children already here," he ponders, "does it make sense to continue admitting more than one million new legal permanent immigrants every year?"

ONE IN FIVE

Our longstanding immigration pattern changed after 1970. Back then, the 13.5 million immigrants represented one in 15 U.S. residents. Since 2000, with rising and largely uncontrolled numbers of immigrants, the pattern has changed. Today, nearly one of every five U.S. residents are immigrants. These

immigrants, immediately handed a federal basket of goodies, will vote in the direction that those who applaud mass, uncontrolled immigration have steered them.

Camarota observes that the "number of immigrants and their young children grew six times faster than the nation's total population from 1970 to 2015." In short, we have been culture-swamped. Did you get to vote on having the immigrant population here grow six times faster than the total population?

CULTURAL PRESERVATION IS NOT XENOPHOBIA

People who have lived here their entire lives have rights to the preservation of their culture—the same as a Laotian, a Rwandan, or a Norwegian has to theirs. Rather than imply that those who want to see order restored in the face of immigration challenges are xenophobic, perhaps we all need to give strong consideration to these kinds of questions:

1. How does the increased pressure on social services as a result of escalating immigration reshape our tax structure?
2. How have other nations fared after they launched a wealth redistribution effort like ours?
3. Historically, what other nations survived such an onslaught?
4. If the survival rate is ominous, how are we going to fix

the situation here?

5. Who specifically will do the job?

If we don't know the answers to such questions then, obviously, we have no business adding to the problem as a result of ignorance, laxity, and the quest to pursue a political agenda. Moreover, unless we strive to support the health, well-being, income, and prospects for our citizens, we have no business rolling the die when it comes to their welfare.

A RIGHT AND A RESPONSIBILITY

In the words of the late Barbara Jordan—the first African-American woman elected to the Texas Senate, and the first woman to serve Texas in the U.S. House of Representatives—"It is both a right and a responsibility of a democratic society to manage immigration so that it serves the national interest."

Jeff Davidson of Raleigh is a regular contributor to Chatham County Line. He is "The Work-Life Balance Expert", the premier thought leader on work-life balance issues, Jeff is the author of 65 books, among them Breathing Space, Dial it Down, Live it Up, Simpler Living, 60 Second Innovator, and 60 Second Organizer. Visit www.BreathingSpace.com

Pittsboro, Chatham Need To Prepare For 'Future Shock'

by Brittany Perloff

Within the next 30 years, Pittsboro as it is, will cease to exist. Chatham Park, a colossal developer, plans to turn the east side of Pittsboro into what they call, "The Best Master Planned Community." This project will cost more than \$15 billion and increase Pittsboro's population from a mere 4,000 to a whopping 60,000. Chatham Park plans to build new shops, restaurants and residential communities for the, "Pursuit of a Perfect Community." This kind of drastic change has people wondering what will become of their beloved small town.

"A lot of people will make a lot of money, but a lot of people will be upset because their idea of a small town is gone," said a Pittsboro business owner who asked remain anonymous.

When money-hungry mass-developers call for growth and revitalization, our fight is often lost. Like years ago, when a group called Pittsboro Matters filed a law suit against Chatham Park in effort to reason with its developers. Instead, the lawsuit was dismissed.

Chatham Park projects to "generate \$146 million of annual public revenue for the county." After, of course, costing the county

\$80 billion in the process.

"I remember in 2007-2008, there were developments going up all over Chatham County, and then in 2009 they were all ghost towns," said the Pittsboro business owner.

We can speculate whether or not Chatham Park will survive in the current economic climate. At this point, "nothing will stop the process," said a Bear Creek resident. Is the only way for Chatham Park to cease to exist purely circumstantial?

"I want the county and the town government to be involved with it as much as possible.

It's a really little town, it's hard to get people to participate in the local government," stressed the Pittsboro business owner.

Interestingly, I found that every individual I spoke to about Chatham Park wanted to remain anonymous in this article. I can only assume that speaking negatively about a big business with numerous resources and exorbitant amount of money is generally feared.

A Pittsboro resident of 12 years fears that big retailers could choke out the local shops

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