

from the young kids, from everybody choosing to become more responsible in taking care of their own body and their own health.

A big argument for legalization and regulation here in the States is the creation of tax revenue and domestic jobs. How do you plan to defend against American protectionism?

My highest priority is to stop the violence, and this is one clear way that we will accomplish that. But we are linked, totally linked, through NAFTA. And this means that we cannot make separate, independent decisions. What's going on here in the United States to legalization has a strong impact in Mexico. It has a very strong impact on the border itself. So if we move ahead in Mexico and speed up the process, it will have a very strong impact also in states like California. These are the reasons to work together.

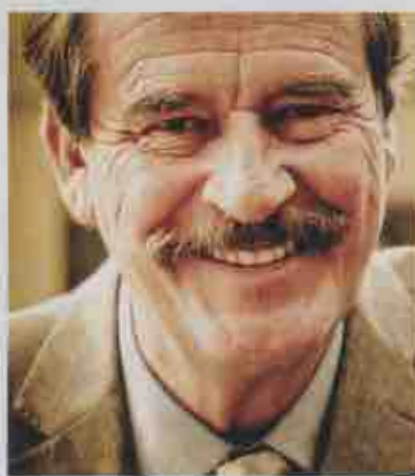
In the US, the National Institute on Drug Abuse controls the supply of marijuana for all clinical studies. Because of its focus on addiction and abuse, NIDA supplies marijuana exclusively for studies on the negative effects of cannabis. How does it work in Mexico? Would you like to see Mexico become a center for cannabis research?

Right now, the situation is totally of abstinence. No research, nothing—it's just the culture of prohibition. This is one thing that I have discussed with the groups here [in the US]. We're going to propose a very sophisticated research process. [There are] many good products in Mexico: peyote and many other herbs and plants that are used by the indigenous communities for curative purposes. I'm sure this plant has those advantages. I'm not a user, of course—I won't ever be a user. But I respect [the right of] anybody to make decisions that have to do with himself [and that don't] affect third

parties. I'm not in agreement with it, but I fully respect [the right to make those decisions].

Jamen Shively has come under fire for trying to market cannabis too early. Yet you've praised his efforts. What are his critics missing?

I happen to know Jamen from a long, long time ago. He's got a good heart. He's compassionate and he's passionate about what he's doing, and he's absolutely convinced



mind brilliant and do great things in the world.

We're moving from prohibition to regulation. What is being discussed right now in Washington State by the alcohol and cigarette agencies is that regulation—where you can smoke, whether or not you can [use] it before you drive, or whether someone is old enough to do this responsibly—should be better than the [regulations] they have for alcohol or cigarettes. Regulation is a key factor, and

“You have a guy like Steve Jobs: He used cannabis and LSD for 10 years, and he's the Einstein of the 21st century.”

that he's doing good for the community. I met him when he was still working with Microsoft and I met him before, when he used to come to Mexico to build latrines at the homes of the poor. He's convinced that with this, we can reduce the violence in Mexico; that through this, we can make the youth more responsible and get them out of crime and violence. And he's convinced that this plant, which his grandfather used to harvest and grow, is a good plant that only makes you sick if you use it excessively. So the thing is to administrate yourself [and your use]. You have a guy like Steve Jobs: He used cannabis and LSD for 10 years, and he's the Einstein of the 21st century, one of the most brilliant minds we can conceive of. He was able to administrate himself [and maintain] his health, keep his

is very different from prohibition in ethical and moral terms. Not only did God create us free, but the founding fathers of this nation were absolutely committed to the idea that governments do not have the right to intervene in my conscience, my behavior or in my decision-making—unless I affect third parties; then the state has the right to intervene. But if not, it shouldn't happen.

In June, the Organization of American States (OAS) suggested revisiting the War on Drugs. The American ambassador said the US would consider any solution other than legalization. Did you see any progress in that assembly?

No, not at all yet. By the way, a delegation [from the OAS] is coming to the symposium, and that's going to be very important, because now

we have to pass from debate and discussion of ideas to action, and these steps have only been taken in Washington, Colorado, Poland and Portugal. They're leading this change, this game change. And what is key is that today we are in the game. People like Jamen, they are in the arena; they have assumed a responsibility upon their shoulders, and they know that they cannot make mistakes. They know that they have to run this process totally in accordance

with the law and with the will of the people. So they have to be very careful, because they are the leaders; they are the vanguard.

We, the rear guard, will come behind them. And this is what I really have an interest in [seeing] happen—because if Mexico narrows the gap, then Mexico will start moving to the vanguard. And I'm sure we will attend to it. Mexican people are a very conservative, religious popula-

tion in some parts of [the country]. Others [parts] are not—they're very liberal, like Mexico City. I spoke with the mayor of Mexico City, which is the second-most-important political position in Mexico after the president, and he's totally open. He will let all this not only be discussed and debated, but he will open the possibilities to go to Congress with bills that would change the situation.

Has the current president of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto, improved at all on Calderón's reign with regards to the Drug War?

It's very different to be in that chair, responsible for so many things. You cannot move so freely. Some would think that presidents can do what they want. No, presidents have a big responsibility, and they have to balance

SUPERCLOSET

1 Selling Grow Boxes in the World



SuperLocker LED

66" h x 15" w x 24" d

FEATURING:



- Slim design fits anywhere
- Grow up to 8 plants in the SuperPonics System
- Clone up to 14 plants in the SuperCloner
- Always be growing with Continual Harvest Rotation

SuperLocker Video



www.supercloset.com

P.O. Box 883463 Los Angeles, CA 90088 Tel: +1 310 476-9707 Fax: +1 310 285-0301

out positions. So I understand President Peña's not taking a position; I understand that President Obama has not taken a position personally. But also, I understand that in their minds and in their conscience, they know that this is coming, and they know this will happen. So what they are waiting for is public opinion to advance. Today, citizens and public opinion are way ahead of governments. Sooner or later, [those governments] will have to obey—they will have to listen to what the people are demanding.

It seems that Mexico is stuck between a rock and a hard place: between a ravenous US drug market and an intransigent US law-enforcement apparatus. Yet given the benefit of hindsight, do you see any way you could have possibly turned the tide?

I'm very proud that in my last year in government, 2006, the lowest crime rate in the history of Mexico was accomplished. What detonated the [current situation], I think, was, number one, bringing the army into the streets—I think that was the wrong decision, and I said so to Calderón, who is in my own party, but who I had to [disagree with]. I think it was a big mistake. But the problem here is [Mexico's position] in between the mammoth consumer market of the United States and the drug-producing nations in the south—Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. Mexico's trapped in between.

The philosophy of the United States is to take the war out of your territory. So you go to Vietnam, you go to Iraq. You go everywhere to make

"My position goes further than legalizing marijuana—I'm for legalizing everything, and letting each individual decide what he wants to do."

war, to avoid war here. So the strategy in drugs is to say, "Let's stop the drugs there in Colombia." Now it's Mexico. We get a tip of 500 million US dollars a year, but behind that is an instruction: "Okay, you hold them down there in Mexico. [We] don't want to see them here."

And once the drug crosses the border, it's everywhere in the States. So I ask myself, what is the DAE—or whatever the agency's name is—what is the CIA [doing]? Where are the police that are supposed to be enforcing the law? Because the United States is one of the very few countries that is still holding [on to] prohibition. In Mexico, it's not prohibited—you don't have a penalty because you consume drugs. It's prohibited to distribute and to sell, but not to consume, and the same is [true] in all of Europe. The only nation that keeps the prohibition is here. And how can you explain then that [the US is] the largest consumer market in the world? It is very contradictory, what is going on here.

You've said that you'd grow the plant yourself if it was legal. Have you put any thought into

what you'd grow—if you'd grow outdoors or indoors, or if it would be a hobby or a business?

Well, this is [just the] press: They asked me, "Once it's legal, and you being a farmer, would you produce marijuana?" Why not? Maybe I will.

Here in America, we've seen the rise of synthetic cannabinoids. Have they become a presence in Mexico? What is your relationship to them?

I understand that it's a growing part of the market—not the natural products, but the chemical and artificial products. Those are the ones that are expanding the market. And those are also produced here in the States. You're a large producer of those kinds of drugs. So that's why my position goes further than legalizing marijuana—I'm for legalizing *everything*, and letting each individual decide on his own responsibility what he wants to do.

If you could deliver a message to President Obama, what would it be, in terms of what he can do now?

As I said, the responsibility of being president is *something*. But what he has to do is to listen, to get good information, to learn from experiences [and] not to say no just for the sake of saying no—not to say, "The law prohibits it, and my obligation is to comply with the law." That is true, but he has to be open and, when the

time comes, when the change shows advantages [instead of] disadvantages, he should be open—and he should even lead the change. That he could do, if he wants. ✿

Watch Vicente Fox talk about pot and legalization at hightimes.com/vicentefox.

