

Reason 2

This War Kills Children!

“We could not have done more harm to children of all ages, especially minorities, if we had set out to design a plan to do so.”

Judge James P. Gray

The War on Drugs is a disastrous and deadly *War on Children*. It has psychologically scarred, maimed, or killed millions of our children. The drugs themselves permanently harm or kill remarkably few. Yet we’re consistently told that we wage the War on Drugs to protect our children. This chapter shows how our children and teens pay the most unbearable price; harmed at every stage of their lives by this unwinnable war.

Obscene Fetus and Infant Death Rates

Fetuses don’t get the prenatal care they need, because pregnant women avoid medical attention and essential prenatal care, afraid they’ll be arrested and incarcerated if they acknowledge their drug use. *Ironically and remarkably, the crackbaby scare notwithstanding, the lack of prenatal care causes more spontaneous abortions, stillborns, perinatal morbidity, and permanent harm, and is far more dangerous than the toxic effects of the drugs themselves.*

If we really want to demonstrate true concern for the wellbeing of our kids, we’ll ‘Just Say No’ to this grossly failed and deadly drug policy. (1) Even more shocking and disgusting are the U.S.’s infant- and childhomicide death rates. The World Health Organization reports that our murder rate for infants less than one year of age (51.7 per million live births) is more than three times the same infant murder rate in the Netherlands (15.7). According to the *Journal of Family Violence*, “In the 1970s, three major Western countries had either higher or similar children’s homicide rates to the USA, but by the late 1990s none did. Moreover, between 1974 and 1999, the USA had the biggest rise in baby [less than one year old] and all children’s deaths.” (2)

“ In 2000, infant homicide rates nearly equaled homicide rates among teens ages 15-19, having more than doubled since 1970. ... Furthermore, research studies of infant death data ... indicate that the actual rate of infant deaths attributable to substantial abuse or neglect of infants and children up to 4 years old is more than twice as high as the official rates reported in death certificate data.”

And it’s no surprise to learn the major risk factors associated with these infant homicides: “95 percent were not born in a hospital; ... an initial prenatal visit after the sixth month of pregnancy or no prenatal care; a history of maternal mental illness; 12 or less years of education of the mother; premature birth; and second or subsequent infant born to an unmarried mother (19 years of age or younger). [Furthermore,] blacks are substantially more at risk (25.6 per 100,000) than other races to die of an intentional injury during their first year of life. ... Whites had a rate of 6.0 and Hispanics had an infant homicide rate of 7.3.” (3)