

Marijuana movement's voice bucks stereotype

By Barbara Venezia, Orange County Register

The Regulate Marijuana like Wine Act of 2012 is gaining momentum, and its key advocate isn't your stereotypical hippy-dippy pot smoking liberal. It's a Republican, former federal prosecutor and retired Superior Court judge named James Gray.

Those in the Newport/Costa Mesa area are probably most familiar with Jim through his weekly Daily Pilot columns, "It's a Gray Area." He's a guy with strong opinions and never one to shy away from controversy.

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James Gray, a former federal prosecutor and retired Superior Court judge is co-author of the Regulate Marijuana Like Wine Act of 2012, which he believes is gaining momentum.

A few weeks ago I asked Jim why he's co-authored this act and why he feels it has legs in 2012.

As a former federal prosecutor, he says, "I saw we weren't winning the war against drugs."

There are six groups who will continue to win if this legislation isn't passed, he contends.

- Drug lords making millions – if not billions – annually.
- Juvenile gangs whose main source of funding is drug sales.
- Law enforcement officials who make big money fighting the drug lords and juvenile gangs.
- Politicians who run on anti-drug platforms and keep getting reelected because of it.

- Businesses that build prisons and staff them – and the state’s powerful prison guard union.
- Terrorists who globally fund their operations through drug sales and say “Drug prohibition is the Golden Goose of terrorism.”

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