

Ottawa Journal by David Tilson MP ? The Liberals? hazy marijuana approach

As most Canadians know, the Liberals have promised to legalize marijuana in Canada.

It was a central part of their electoral platform. What is less clear, however, is how they plan on getting to that outcome. Their approach to date has been scattershot, first by appointing Toronto's former Police Chief to lead the file and most recently by appointing yet another committee to study the matter ad infinitum.

Last month, the Liberal government announced a task force, chaired by former Liberal Cabinet Minister Anne McLellan to study the legalization of marijuana. They will report their findings in November. Justin Trudeau and the Liberals have made a complete mess of the marijuana issue by their failure to provide any policy coherence whatsoever.

I have serious concerns about a number of issues regarding the Liberals' promise to legalize marijuana. How are the Liberals going to address the current proliferation of illegal, unregulated marijuana dispensaries? In Vancouver, for example, there are currently more illegal marijuana dispensaries than Starbucks locations. How are the Liberals going to address the public safety issue of people driving and operating heavy equipment while high? How are the Liberals going to ensure that marijuana is going to be kept out of the hands of children?

We also must be concerned about the reaction of our friends and allies to this change in policy. How are the Liberals going to address our international obligations regarding the legality of marijuana? How will they deal with the U.S. reaction, most obviously at the border?

Conservatives realize that this is an issue that is on the minds of many Canadians. That's why at our recent Policy Convention, Conservatives passed the following resolution:

?In order to expand the means which law enforcement authorities have at their disposal to combat drugs and their negative impacts, particularly among young people, and to reduce the volume of judicial proceedings, we recommend that peace officers be enabled to issue tickets for simple possession of small quantities of marijuana.?

Our policy resolution is in line with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, who are also in favour of giving police the ability to ticket individuals found with 30 grams of marijuana or less. This is also in line with the Chiefs who do not believe marijuana should be legalized.

I do not have confidence in the Liberals to put forward a plan to legalize marijuana that will adequately address our serious concerns.

