

We have recently heard many shocking stories of brutal killings and ruthless violence related to drug cartels warring with Mexican and US officials. It is approaching the fever pitch of a full blown crisis.

Unfortunately, the administration is not likely to waste this opportunity to further expand government.

Hopefully, we can take a deep breath and look at history for the optimal way to deal with this dangerous situation, which is not unprecedented.

Alcohol prohibition in the 1920's brought similar violence, gangs, lawlessness, corruption and brutality. The reason for the violence was not that making and selling alcohol was inherently dangerous.

The violence came about because of the creation of a brutal black market which also drove profits through the roof.

These profits enabled criminals like Al Capone to become incredibly wealthy, and militantly defensive of that wealth.

Al Capone saw the repeal of Prohibition as a great threat, and indeed smuggling operations and gangland violence fell apart after repeal.

Today, picking up a bottle of wine for dinner is a relatively

benign transaction, and beer trucks travel openly and peacefully along their distribution routes.

Similarly today, the best way to fight violent drug cartels would be to pull the rug out from under their profits by bringing these transactions out into the sunlight. People who, unwisely, buy drugs would hardly opt for the back alley criminal dealer as a source, if a coffeehouse-style dispensary was an option. Moreover, a law-abiding dispensary is likely to check ID's and refuse sale to minors, as bars and ABC stores tend to do very diligently.

Think of all the time and resources law enforcement could save if they could instead focus on violent crimes, instead of this impossible nanny-state mandate of saving people from themselves!

If these reasons don't convince the drug warriors, I would urge them to go back to the Constitution and consider where there is any authority to prohibit private personal choices

like this. All of our freedoms – the freedom of religion and assembly, the freedom of speech, the right to bear arms, the right to be free from unnecessary government searches and seizures – stem from the precept that you own yourself and are responsible for your own choices. Prohibition laws negate self-ownership and are an absolute affront to the principles of freedom. I disagree vehemently with the recreational use of drugs, but at the same time, if people are only free to make good decisions, they are not truly free.

In any case, states should decide for themselves how to handle these issues and the federal government should respect their choices.

My great concern is that instead of dealing

deliberatively with the actual problems, Congress will be pressed again to act quickly without much thought or debate. I can't think of a single problem we haven't made worse that way.

The panic generated by the looming crisis in Mexico should not be redirected into curtailing more rights, especially our second amendment rights, as seems to be in the works.

Certainly, more gun laws in response to this violence will only serve to disarm lawful citizens.

This is something to watch out for and stand up against.

We have escalated the drug war enough

to see it only escalates the violence and profits associated with drugs.

It is time to try freedom instead.