

## **Drug Testing Poor folks on Welfare Will not end the Recession**



Al Mccray

There were many new bills passed in the last session of the Florida Legislature. It seems like the Legislators either gave rich special interests group just about all they wanted, or they assaulted groups without special interest money. Now that the regular session is over, their final products will soon be law

of the land if the Governor approves. I don't see the Governor Scott vetoing any of the news bills.

It seems like this session of the Legislature had an open season on kicking, knocking and bent mentality at making life more miserable for poor people, the disabled, minorities, unions, voters and teachers and school children. The legislators must have gotten great pleasure picking on classes of people that can least afford defend themselves with six figure lobbyists and campaign contributors.

There are many controversial bills that could become laws. The one that I find to be number one on that list is; the drug testing of poor people receiving welfare checks. The expressed purpose of this particular bill is to stop drug use and to prevent state funds from going to drug dealers, FIDDA, The Florida Illegal Drug Dealers Association.

The singling out of poor folks and minorities on welfare for drug testing will not produce positive results.

It will not reduce the unemployment rate, spur new housing sales, end the recession, fix the judicial cash crunch; it won't even solve the education crisis. It would just have been another wicked assault on an easy targeted group of people by an insensitive legislature.

If this new law does not accomplish anything but create more misery for poor people and minorities, why did they pass it? Two questions come to mind;

1. Did the Legislature lose their "moral conscience"? That is, did they forget what morally right and wrong in governing and protecting all of the citizens of Florida?

2. Who are the intended targets? It is certainly not the members of the Florida Illegal Drug Dealers

Association, FIDDA. Their best customers are not the \$5 (nickel bag) sales to poor people on welfare living in housing projects. Their best customers, (\$100's plus bags) occupy penthouse condos, 27<sup>th</sup> Floor office suites, meet regularly at the 15<sup>th</sup> hole and rich kids going to college.

I support the spirit of the law in drug testing in combating illegal drug use. This bill does not go far enough. Is that really the Legislative objective and not just going after poor people? To be fair and have a reasonable chance of succeeding, the State of Florida must drug test everyone that is getting a check issued by the State. That would include all state employees, all agencies and its employees, state contractors and subcontractors, grants to nonprofits and their employees, people getting unemployment checks, monies to suppliers, retirees, pension managers, students getting state scholarships and all elected officials and their staffs. I would even test the mechanic at

private garages servicing State of Florida vehicles. Let's don't forget to test the companies and vendors supplying staff and food to prisons? How do drugs get into the prisons?

It has been said to me that poor people on welfare sit around all day doing nothing but collecting checks from the State. What about all the people receiving pensions and unemployment checks? What do they do all day? People also tell me that poor welfare people paid nothing into the system and are getting checks? Well before this year, how much did retired State workers pay into their retirement system?

You have to know that even poor people on welfare pay state taxes every time they purchase gas or any non-food taxable item. People on Welfare at one time in their lives had jobs.

This law makes me think about Businesses acting serious about stopping drug use. They drug test their employees but would NEVER EVEER consider drug testing

their 'cash paying' clients. The clients for Florida are its educated voting populace and those with money. If the State of Florida goes after all the people drinking from the state's "getting a check water hole", there would be a massive voters upheaval and revolt. But it could generate a multiyear surplus in the state's coffers.

The legislature and the Governor should protect, respect and treat all the citizens of Florida equitably.

I cannot determine any logical and sound fiscal reasons for this new bill. Perhaps the obvious reason is not always the right reason?

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