
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



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News Release

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Governor Gilmore Unveils Nation's Toughest Anti-Drug Program

**- Anti-drug initiative includes cash bounties, more prison time,
special state police unit, workplace incentives -**

RICHMOND - Declaring President Bill Clinton's war on drugs a failure, Governor Jim Gilmore today unveiled the Substance Abuse Reduction Effort (SABRE) Project, an initiative targeting drug kingpins and dealers - especially those who peddle drugs to children - through cash bounties, revised or new penalties, a new State Police special operations division and mandatory treatment.

"Serious, violent crime is down in Virginia, but we have more work to do because illegal drugs continue to infect our communities and threaten our children, our neighborhoods, and our workplaces," Governor Gilmore said. "Since the war on drugs is failing at the national level, I am proposing this program in order to protect our children, rid our streets and neighborhoods of illegal drugs, help those caught in the downward spiral of abuse and dependence, and prevent others from becoming drug-involved.

"Our enforcement efforts must focus on identifying, arresting and incarcerating the dealers who prey on our children and our communities, and who would bring their poison into Virginia. Our drug control laws and correctional policies must emphasize drug abuse testing, treatment and close community supervision for first-time offenders and for those being released from prison. Our prevention efforts

need to concentrate on models with proven track records."

Highlights of Governor Gilmore's SABRE Project, and legislation going to the 2000 General Assembly, include:

- * Up to \$10,000 bounty for information leading to arrest and conviction for selling drugs to children, possessing or dealing in large amounts of drugs, or operating methamphetamine labs.
- * Mandatory life sentence without parole for kingpins with lower drug and profit levels to qualify. The new levels would be \$100,000 profit in the previous 12 months instead of \$500,000, 1 kilo of heroin instead of 100, 10 kilos of cocaine instead of 500, 1 kilo of crack cocaine instead of 1.5. For the first time, methamphetamines will be included, at 100 grams to qualify as a kingpin. Marijuana growers moving 260 pounds or 500 plants or more, regardless of weight, would qualify as kingpins.
- * Mandatory 20 years to life in prison for dealers who possess illegal drugs in the same amounts as the revised kingpin amounts, except for marijuana, which would have a threshold of 20 kilos.
- * A new, 210-member State Police narcotics eradication operations division. This rapid-response unit would be an independent, statewide division available to assist sheriffs, police chiefs, and regional grand juries. The new division would be phased in over the next two years.
- * Increased minimum, mandatory penalties for selling drugs in a drug-free school zone, selling steroids, and for chronic drug possession or drug sales to support drug addiction.
- * New, five-year minimum, mandatory prison term for selling or furnishing firearms to a child; up to five years in prison for a minor who possesses or transports a handgun or assault firearm.
- * Mandatory testing, treatment and extensive community service for first-time drug offenders and those being released from prison. First-time offenders would bear much of their testing and treatment costs. For those being released from prison, initiatives would include increased probation and parole supervision, support from peer groups, and in-prison transition programs six months before release. Such efforts have a proven track record of reducing the chances that a drug offender will return to prison.
- * Unifying Virginia's drug abuse prevention efforts through a new Governor's Office on Drug Abuse Prevention. A small staff would come from existing agencies that deal with drug prevention.
- * Increased use of locally based prevention programs that have a proven track record, such as "Communities that Care," which targets

juveniles.

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