

Law Enforcement Against Prohibition

About Diane Goldstein

Retired Lieutenant Commander

Lieutenant Commander, Redondo Beach Police Department (Ret.)

"Prohibition is unwise fiscal policy. Education and treatment would be far more effective."



With more than 20 years in law enforcement, Diane Goldstein has made numerous arrests as a longtime foot soldier of the war on drugs. After joining the Redondo Beach Police Department in 1983, she rose from a Patrol Officer and School Resource Officer to Sergeant in the Special Investigations Unit, finally retiring as a Lieutenant Commander in 2004. During her time on the frontlines, her perspective on the war on drugs shifted gradually to strong opposition. It was a change forged not only through her professional experience, but by the wrenching personal impact of having a vulnerable family member become a casualty of this war:

"I was extremely close with my older brother and watched him battle mental illness, through long periods of sobriety, deep valleys of marijuana and other illegal drug use to help him during severe manic states. As a youth, he made mistakes and was held accountable for them by the judicial system. But with psychotropic meds and mental health treatment, he managed to mature, remain sober and work productively until his 40s when he lost his job and was unable to afford ongoing mental health treatment. My brother was arrested for possession of drug paraphernalia-a misdemeanor-but it propelled his descent into a justice system that wouldn't consider any mitigating factors, only his previous felony conviction."

As Diane rose through the ranks of law enforcement, she coordinated multiple agencies in probation and parole searches and became a specialist in juvenile crime prevention, gang intervention, and a recognized leader in crisis management. She also developed national training guidelines and policies for use during critical incidents.

Diane joined LEAP as a result of her own experiences and what she read in LEAP speaker Judge James Gray's book, *Why Our Drug Laws Have Failed And What We Can Do About It: A Judicial Indictment of the War on Drugs*. As she puts it, our nation's program of drug prohibition is fiscally unsound and fundamentally unjust.

A member of the California Association of Hostage Negotiators, Diane received that organization's Honorary Life Member Award, and earned the Herman Goldstein Excellence in Problem Solving Team Award (Honorary Mention) for her work on a gang interdiction task force.