

CLERK: (Read Chambers amendment as found on page 981 of the Legislative Journal.)

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, since we are going to become as realistic as we can, I'm offering this amendment, and I'm going to vote for it. For a long time, I've halted between two opinions, whether or not increased enforcement measures will in any way affect the sale and possession and use of drugs. Years of experience throughout the country have indicated that that is a failed method. When I consider that people such as William F. Buckley, a noted conservative who is praised by everybody from Ronald Reagan to the man who played Ben Hur, has said that drugs should be legalized, there are numerous politicians, newspaper columnists, people who are experts in the drug field, including some law enforcement persons, who are convinced that the attempt to fight drugs, by spending more money, building more prisons, increasing the number of police officers, judges and further encumbering the justice system is doomed to failure. When you look realistically at the nature of the problem, some recommendations that at first blush seem unreasonable suddenly don't seem so when compared to the ineffectiveness of what is being done now and what is being recommended. For example, in Columbia, Peru and Bolivia, it would be far cheaper for the United States to buy the entire drug crop, not just the coca plants, but the drugs themselves at the going rate and destroy them. America pays far more in trying to fight these drugs than it would cost to purchase it outright. And that is not unreasonable, if the real aim is to stop this scourge. But there are a lot of institutions, a lot of agencies that gain from the existence of the "drug problem". Police divisions need the existence of a drug problem, they need a gang scare to push for increased officers, more overtime pay, better pension benefits, earlier retirement because of the stress created by these circumstances. Judges have made use of this supposed problem by asking for additional judges. The increase in activity in the courts, based directly on drug arrests, was used effectively to persuade the Legislature to create a new appellate court system. Now we're being asked to use the Revenue Department as an arm to fight the drug problem. This is an easy issue for any politician to run on, because who, other than myself perhaps, is going to stand up and consistently and vociferously oppose these