

# National Black Church Initiative

P.O. Box 65177  
Washington, DC 20035  
202-744-0184  
dcbci2002@yahoo.com  
www.naltblackchurch.com

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Contact:  
Rev. Anthony Evans  
202-744-0184

## NATIONAL BLACK CHURCH INITIATIVE JOINED FORMER DEA LEADERSHIP TO CONDEMN PROP 19

### *DRUG PREVENTION COALITIONS ALSO PARTICIPATED*

**Washington DC-** The National Black Church Initiative (**NBCI**), a coalition of 34,000 churches, stood in solidarity with members from law enforcement, family groups, and drug prevention and treatment communities to denounce California's Proposition 19 effort to legalize marijuana.

Advocates of Proposition 19 view the legalized sale of marijuana as a solution to California's financial woes and prison overcrowding. Rev. Anthony Evans, president of NBCI, joined with 9 former head of the Drug Enforcement Agency (**DEA**) on a panel at the National Press Club to urge California citizens to vote against this desperate, ill-advised measure- and for Attorney General Eric Holder to speak against it before the November election. "Despite what many have been led to believe, marijuana is not a harmless drug. It would only further destroy a community that is already broken by crime and terrible health statistics, when what it really needs is more moral direction- not drugs," said Evans.

Rev. Evans vowed to use the full force of the 34,000 African American churches to kill Proposition 19, which he viewed as an "unconscionable" move that would weaken the Black Church, the Black community and the Black family. Approximately 75 percent of all children in foster care in the nation are there because of parental substance abuse- and many of those children come from the Black community. We do not need to lose more of our children!"

Narcotics treatment psychiatrist Dr. Robert DuPont pointed to legalized gambling as a precedent for measures to encourage tax revenue that can create more societal damage than they solve with rising costs related to crime and addiction. DuPont served as the founding president of the National Institute on Drug Abuse in 1973. "The law is a major public health strategy, and many people are in treatment because of the law," DuPont said. "If passed, Proposition 19 will lead more people into addiction."

Former DEA Chief Administrator Peter Bensinger called marijuana legalization “a disaster waiting to happen” because of increased drug-induced carelessness such as driving under the influence. “Safety in the streets will be jeopardized. On the highways, in the workplace-everywhere,” Bensinger said. The Obama administration’s National Drug Control Strategy reads, “this Administration firmly opposes the legalization of marijuana or any other drug.” Bensinger and other former DEA leaders sent a letter to Attorney General Holder to remind him to uphold this statement, since Prop. 19 would stand in direct conflict with The Federal Controlled Substances Act. Rev. Evans is planning to travel to California personally to lead opposition efforts in Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego and San Francisco in association with the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Officers.

“We will not tolerate any drugs in our community, and we will continue to vigorously oppose those who are in support of it, such as the misguided California Chapter of the NAACP.”

### **About NBCI**

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) is a coalition of 34,000 African American and Latino churches working to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare, technology, education, housing, and the environment. NBCI’s mission is to provide critical wellness information to all of its members, congregants, churches and the public. The National Black Church Initiative’s methodology is utilizing faith and sound health science. The National Black Church Initiative's purpose is to partner with major organizations and officials whose main mission is to reduce racial disparities in the variety of areas cited above. NBCI offers faith-based, out-of-the-box and cutting edge solutions to stubborn economic and social issues. NBCI’s programs are governed by credible statistical analysis, science based strategies and techniques, and methods that work.