

# A History of Revolution Leads to the Providence Prohibition Party

## Progressive Change with Providence Prohibition Party



In 1972, one of the first documented hemp festivals in the US took place in Ann Arbor, Mich. It was a response to new Michigan legislation that reduced the penalty for marijuana possession from 10 years to 1 year and the penalty for marijuana sale from a life sentence to a 4-year sentence. Though these changes seemed a great victory to those against marijuana prohibition, some felt that they didn't do enough. And so was born the Hash Bash. Shortly thereafter, Michigan made even greater strides toward reform, practically decriminalizing marijuana use by replacing prison sentences for possession with a \$5 fine (now \$25).

Hundreds of other cannabis-related events take place each year. In 1989, the Boston Freedom Rally began and has become one of the largest hemp festivals in the world. In 1991 the first Seattle Hemp Fest took place and has become the world's largest public gathering to advocate for marijuana decriminalization. Even under the scrutiny of federal law, these events continue to sprout up and grow each year, defiant of the unjust laws that bind them. In states such as Colorado and Washington, rallies have led to massive changes in laws and regulations. Decriminalization and medical marijuana laws now are recognized in over 23 states with many others, including Rhode Island, seeking full legalization and regulation.

In Rhode Island, a bill to regulate and tax marijuana was completely discarded by the house judiciary committee this year. In response to the legislature's refusal to acknowledge a shift in public opinion, Rhode Islanders will make their own statement. *13 Folds Magazine* is hosting Providence's first hemp festival, dubbed the Providence Prohibition Party and sponsored by *Motif*, MBS, Green Side Up, Regulate RI and a variety of other organizations that want to end RI's failed war on drugs. This event

will feature local celebrities, political activists, vendors and performers as well as some of the very best local and national bands, including Boo City and Atlantic Thrills. There will be an indoor dance party running all night for those who like to travel with glow sticks, and a beer tasting sponsored by New England breweries, such as Fool Proof and Bucket Brewery, will take place between 4 and 7pm.

Though it may not carry the same recognition as other festivals, this event is just as relevant. It represents a challenge to unjust laws and a desire for progressive change. Decriminalization and medical acceptance are a step forward in the fight to end prohibition, yet they are not enough. Too many families, communities and futures have been destroyed by the authority's actions toward a substance less harmful than tobacco, alcohol or even sugar. Too many tax dollars have been spent and too many lives have been lost in an attempt to eradicate a substance that was once considered this country's number one cash crop. Too many lies and misconceptions have been perpetrated for us to accept anything less than a complete overhaul in our marijuana laws and reparation toward those unjustly prosecuted. In order to fully right the wrongs that this war against marijuana has caused, we must follow the lead of those who pioneered the historical Hash Bash and push for full legalization and regulation ... and nothing less.

Please join the Providence Prohibition Party on Saturday, July 12, at Simon's on 677 Valley St., Providence, to support the movement. Ten percent of all proceeds will go to Regulate RI to help fund the mission to reeducate society on the truths behind the war on drugs, its effects on our community and its negative impact on cultural and industrial progress. This event will also provide local artists and musicians the opportunity to gain exposure and support themselves. The Providence Prohibition Party will allow our community to come together in support of one another and demonstrate our commitment to bringing about change to archaic regulations.

To learn more, visit *13 Folds Magazine's* events page on Facebook:  
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