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For Immediate Release
June 13, 2011

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DENVER JOINS NATION IN SAYING “NO MORE DRUG WAR!”
Rally in Skyline Park to Commemorate Notorious 40th Anniversary of Nixon’s
War on Drugs

Denver, Colo. – June 17th will mark forty years since President Richard Nixon, citing drug abuse as “public enemy No. 1,” officially declared a “war on drugs.” A trillion dollars and millions of ruined lives later, the war on drugs remains an abject failure.

Drug policy reform advocates all across the country will mark this auspicious date with a day of action to raise awareness about the failure of drug prohibition and call for an exit strategy to the failed war on drugs.

To commemorate the 40th anniversary, drug policy reform organizations will hold a national day of action. Denver will join 15 other states in holding events, including major cities like New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco and New Orleans. The day of action will be highlighted with a large-scale event with elected officials in Washington, DC.

In Denver, a rally will be hosted by the Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition and Drug Policy Alliance. A bipartisan group of speakers and concerned citizens, including Mike Krause of the Independence Institute, Mason Tvert from SAFER and Dr. Vincent Harding from the Iliff School of Theology, will reveal the tragedy and waste that is the War on Drugs.

“Since the declaration of this War, millions of people have been incarcerated for low-level drug violations and trillions of dollars have been spent, but addiction, overdose and incarceration are more prevalent than ever,” said Pam Clifton, Communications Coordinator of the Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition. “Hundreds of thousands of lives have been lost in the United States due to drug overdose, Hepatitis C and AIDS because life-saving interventions were not readily available.”

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Who: The Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition, the Independence Institute and the Drug Policy Alliance, along with other local organizations and members of the community

What: Rally to mark the Anniversary the War on Drugs

When: Friday, June 17, 2011
11:00am to 1:00pm

Where: Skyline Park
Between 16th and 17th Ave. on Arapahoe Street
Denver

“Some anniversaries provide an occasion for celebration, others a time for reflection, still others a time for action, said Ethan Nadelmann, executive director of the Drug Policy Alliance. “Forty years after President Nixon declared his war on drugs, we're seizing upon this anniversary to prompt both reflection and action. And we're asking everyone who harbors reservations about the war on drugs -- to join us in this enterprise.

“The War on Drugs has created an environment in which police abuse civilians before asking questions. The militarization and subsequent dehumanizing of law enforcement is a direct result of the political cover, equipment and resources provided by the War on Drugs,” said Art Way, Colorado Manager of the Drug Policy Alliance.

Other Day of Action events include:

- Chicago – Hundreds of Chicagoans will gather at the State of Illinois James R Thompson Center to rally against drug policies that have led to injustices such as extreme racial disparity in Illinois’s prisons and jails.
- Los Angeles – Grassroots organizations and students, including Students for Sensible Drug Policy, Pico Youth and Family Center, Mother United to End the War on Drugs, All of Us or None, Homies Unidos and other criminal justice organizations, will stage a Day of Action to call for Community Solutions to end the 40 year war on drugs and mass incarceration. Also, the William C. Velasquez Institute will host a forum in Los Angeles with top Latino leaders to discuss the impact of the drug war on Latino communities.
- New York - Advocates, community leaders and elected officials will attend a forum and silent vigil at the Harlem State Office Building to highlight the impacts of the drug war on NY communities. The event will be organized by Women on the Rise Telling HerStory (WORTH).
- Washington, DC- Law enforcement officials, leaders from the African American Community and religious leaders will hold a forum at the National Press Club to denounce current drug war policies. Leaders will call for a new direction and open conversation on the issue of drug prohibition.