

#188

**Appropriations Committee Agency Presentations and Public
Hearing on the Governor's Proposed Budget,**

March 2, 2011 Presentation by Nicholas Payne 203 417 3978

nwpayne@earthlink.net

Madame Chair and members of the committee.

Last November I ran for State Representative for the 67th District, New Milford on the Green Party ticket. At the hundreds and hundreds of houses I visited campaigning, one aspect of Green Party policy I emphasized is reform of the drug laws. To wit, legalization of marijuana, Portuguese style dissuasion commissions for hard drug offenders and provisions to allow heroin addicts in treatment to be legally able to get supplies of the drug. The overwhelming response I received was "about time". I did actually have two people argue for the status quo, one said he was a heroin dealer, and another young man who used deal drugs at New Milford High School.

The reason I am bringing it up here is that the current system does little to reduce access to drugs but creates a lot of violence, which entrenches poverty in our cities. This as you know is most expensive budget item of all, both through expense and suppression of revenue. Nothing I have proposed is out of line with the conclusions of the IMRP Drug Policy Project which of course is funded by this Legislature. It is simply that the academics say with greater precision, what is blindingly obvious to the general public. Note, I am not thinking specifically of the 3% who take these hard drugs, but of the benefit of the 97% who don't.

The Governor's Budget is workmanlike, but does nothing but suck money out of the economy and nothing to slow the exodus of young professionals, whereas I propose breathing life into our cities and the end of policies that only benefit drug dealers.

Finally, I am not here as a policy wonk, but as one of the 97%, after our daughter Rebecca went to college in Boston and ended being murdered by mistake in a drug related hit on the wrong apartment. Thank you ladies and gentlemen of the committee for your time and forbearance.