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Publication: The State – Columbia, SC  
Date: 2009 Feb 22  
Section: Money & Opinion  
Page Number: D2

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## Letters to the Editor

'War on Drugs' not defeating drug problem

Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott was wise to end the investigation of Michael Phelps on possible drug-related charges. His attempt to pursue the Olympic hero, particularly during a budget crisis that has law enforcement officials scrambling to conserve limited resources, highlights the folly of current drug policy.

The "War on Drugs" has backfired, making marijuana more accessible and attractive to young people drawn to the forbidden pleasure. Regulation of marijuana, in place of prohibition, could more effectively limit its availability, as is the case with alcohol and prescription drugs.

Many young people tune out the overblown "drug war" rhetoric that relies on scare tactics and misinformation. We need a drug policy that stresses fact-based education and offers our youth support that will help them make good decisions and abstain from using drugs.

Millions of Americans have been jailed on minor drug offenses, clogging our prisons and clouding their lives. For people already living in poverty, the consequences of draconian punishment may prove insurmountable. Surely there are more pressing public safety needs than zealously enforcing these misguided laws.

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