

# Envision | Issue Statement Paper

---

## Group Name

Citizens of Peace

## Authors

1. Blake Barclay (Junior, Pensacola, Florida)
2. Colton Anderson (Junior, Boone, Iowa)
3. Konnor Halteman (Senior, Carrollton, Texas)
4. Hailee Andrews (Junior, Union, Kentucky)
5. Isabella Chavez (Freshman, Temple City, California)
6. Reid Burton (Sophomore, Rochester, New York)

## Issue and Topic

Imagining Peace: Conflict and Compromise in a Global Age

## Thesis

The drug trade in Latin America is preventing peace from taking root in the region and in peripheral areas and, in order to stop this crisis and promote long lasting peace, the United States must better enforce border security measures, promote cooperation among Latin American governments and United States' organizations, and work to decrease economic dependency on the drug trade.

## Background on the Issue

This is a not only a pressing issue that we have all seen across the news and seen hurt our communities, but also a student in our group has felt this personally: Reid Burton's brother, pictured in the final slide of our PowerPoint presentation, passed away a year ago as a result of a drug overdose. The issue not only causes violence and economic harm, but severe family impacts and harm that is destroying lives and hurting families - American families.

## Problem Statement

The Latin American drug trade and its impact on the United States is undeniable. According to the Heritage Foundation, over 2,000 illegal guns cross the US border every day in addition to thousands of kilograms of illicit contraband and drug related paraphernalia. Human life is also being compromised, as over 1,000 US enforcement agents were killed last year as a direct result of the drug trade and people up to age 50

living in the affected nations in Latin America are significantly less likely to live than those in nations not affected, according to the UN. All involved nations, including the US, receive middle to low scores from the Global Peace Index, or GPI, (2016) when ranking peace and stability. This is an extremely pressing matter and is not only harming stability in our region and threatening the safety of US citizens, but it is economically detrimental. The GPI also believes that because of international violence, like that caused by the massive drug superhighway throughout the Americas, results in a GDP globally that is almost 13% lower than it could potentially be in a more peaceful environment. By investing in peace, we can achieve a greater level of safety, stability, and financial growth.

## **Sustainable Solution**

By working with the Latin American nations and our allies, possibly including the UN, we believe that forming an aid package to build infrastructure in the region and fund education and drug rehabilitation, we can decrease economic and social dependency on the drug trade. In addition to this, by working with other organizations, we believe that we can work to inflate the value of cash crops to allow farmers to grow legal and beneficial crops like cocoa, coffee, and maize, so that local farmers do not have to resort to growing drugs to make a living.

By securing the US border by physical and technological means, we believe that we can eliminate the entry point for the majority of illegal contraband and violence being transported from Latin America to the US, thus decreasing the threat to Americans and helping Latin American nations affected by the issue by eliminating a market for the drug traders and cartels. By eliminating their chief market, we can cripple the cartels and reduce their power to make it easier to eliminate their influence and power by force or by continued economic isolation and irrelevancy.