

Drug testing



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Drug Testing: An Unnecessary Evil Testing an employee for the presence of marijuana in their system could give a positive result weeks after the person had been exposed to the drug, possibly at a weekend party that had no connection to their work. It is almost like the tyranny of authority has taken ownership of peoples lives and dictates what they can do not only at work, but also in their private hours. Still, boarding an airplane where the pilot had smoked joint just hours before takeoff may cause the person to deboard and wait for a sober pilot. This illustrates the complexity of random drug testing in the workplace. There is a need to assure the publics safety when lives are placed in the hands of a pilot or a policeman. There is also a need to protect the privacy and rights of the individual that are a part of the American way of life. How do we reconcile public safety against the backdrop of the principle of presumed innocence? For most occupations drug testing is an excessive intrusion into privacy that violates the constitutional principles of self-incrimination and legal search and seizure.

The constitutional guarantees that protect our privacy and require probable cause are illegally suspended when employers require mandatory and random drug testing. According to the US Department of Labor guidelines, "The current law in the private sector generally permits non-union companies to require applicants and/or employees to take drug tests" (Drug Testing). The long lasting remnants of drug residue and the possibility of false positive results erodes the reliability of these tests. Constitutional rights and the liability for poor results should not be a condition of employment in America. Schools have often been at the forefront of drug testing, but students also are protected by the constitution. Random testing should be eliminated in favor of the same laws that require probable cause that a crime has been

committed. " Reasonable suspicion/cause testing involves a school requiring a student to provide a urine specimen when there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the student may have used an illicit substance" (What is drug testing). These are the same rules, laws, and constitutional protections that are granted to all Americans. Eliminating random drug testing in schools is simply abiding by our laws and constitution.

Critics will argue that random drug testing is the surest and best way to eliminate drug use from the workplace and schools. They contend that the mere possibility of being tested greatly reduces drug use. However, the exorbitant cost of \$6 billion a year has only resulted in highly exaggerated claims that there is any correlation between drug testing and productivity or safety (Deterrent Effect). While random drug testing robs the public of their freedoms and rights, it does little to improve the profitability or safety of the workplace or school.

In conclusion, random drug testing is a violation of our constitutional rights and should never be used as a condition of employment. Schools, a target of drug testing, should not suspend the students rights as a condition of attending. While it may be appropriate to test workers in high-risk occupations that have given some probable cause that they may be intoxicated, the high price tag of the program has yielded few, if any, positive results. The suspension and elimination of constitutional rights is too high a price to pay to promote drug testing in the workplace and schools.

Works Cited

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