

# GIL KERLIKOWSKE

## Nominee to be the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy

### Gil Kerlikowske's Record

- The year that Kerlikowske took over as police chief, there were 332 arrests for misdemeanor marijuana possession. After six years of his "leadership," arrests fell to 148.
- In 2003, there was a vote on Initiative 75 to make marijuana possession the lowest law enforcement priority. Gil Kerlikowske opposed the initiative but did little to defeat it. He said that arresting people for possessing marijuana for personal use was not a priority. In this and other drug debates, Kerlikowske has had little to say.
- Every year tens of thousands of potheads gather in Seattle to smoke in public during "Hempfest." Hempfest organizers always praise the police for their tolerance and respect. Kerlikowske similarly has no problem with the city's methadone vans or needle exchange programs, which is one of the nation's largest needle programs.
- Kerlikowske allowed an officer, who has since been promoted, to establish the Get Off The Street program, or GOTS. This program aimed to help criminals by dispensing health information in an arrest-free zone. A recent analysis by the mayor's staff showed the program made little difference in the lives of those it targets.
- In 2001, a riot broke out on Mardi Gras at Seattle's Pioneer Square. Rather than send his officers in to break up the riot, Kerlikowske ordered them to stand idly by. So police officers stood at the edge of the crowd while the victims pleaded for help. Scores were injured, several women were sexually assaulted, and Kris Kime died amid the violence. Kime's family sued, and Seattle settled out of court for \$1,750,000 and acknowledged that its police strategy had presented a public safety threat.

Kerlikowske, however, felt that he had made the right decision. Apparently his officers felt otherwise. In March of 2001, the Seattle Police Officers' Guild overwhelmingly (88%) voted no confidence in Kerlikowske.

- An FBI investigation of his Buffalo police department began in 1997. The FBI investigated citizen complaints of police officers torturing people with pepper spray. In 1998, Kerlikowske left Buffalo to take a job at the Justice Department, but the federal probe expanded. In 2002, an agreement was reached with the Justice Department. The agreement called for the Justice Department to take oversight of the force.

- Romelle Bradford, another young black man with a clean record, was awarded \$268,000 by a federal jury in a civil rights case. Charges of obstruction and resisting arrest were dropped against him.
- In 2007, Seattle settled a lawsuit filed by Maikoiyo Alley-Barnes for \$185,000. In his lawsuit, he alleged that the police had used excessive force in a 2005 littering incident. During the incident, officers grabbed his genitals, punched him, kicked him, and wrestled him to the ground. Kerlikowske exonerated two of the officers involved in the arrest. The sergeant, who was largely blamed for the incident by the department's Office of Professional Accountability, received a promotion instead of punishment.
- Between January of 2006 and June of 2007, Seattle spent over \$400,000 to settle police misconduct cases. In addition, it paid \$6,000,000 to the private law firm which handles the cases.
- This past year, the local NAACP chapter held a press conference to discuss the increase in complaints of racial profiling they had received. A black probation officer told how she was investigated after she came to the defense of a black teen who was accused of stealing from a store that had not reported a theft. Two teens, one black and one white, reported that they had received very different treatment at the hands of police.
- After Kerlikowske repeatedly refused to discipline officers and gave others only a slap on the wrist, the Seattle chapter of the NAACP finally called for his resignation in 2007. The Minority Executive Directors Coalition, a group of 80 minority community leaders, immediately echoed the resignation call.
- In December of 2004, Gil Kerlikowske went shopping with his wife. He left his personal gun in his unlocked, unmarked police car, and the 9mm Glock pistol was stolen.
- Kerlikowske has advocated for bans on semi-automatic rifles and for requiring background checks on private sales at gun shows. In addition, he believes that gun dealers should be left open to lawsuits.
- Kerlikowske ordered officers not to ask individuals about their immigration status or take action solely due to immigration status and he teamed up with the Mexican consulate to fight gangs.