

For Immediate Release: God to Play HEA Benefit Concert at Union College

- **What:**

Due to a 1998 amendment to the Higher Education Act, the legislation which created FAFSA, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, tens of thousands of college students are denied their ability to attend college. They are otherwise completely qualified to receive federal aid, but have been convicted of a minor, non-violent drug offense, and have automatically lost their eligibility for a period of time from one year to indefinite. They are the only class of offense specifically denied aid, and removing federal aid is an ability already possessed by judges.

Considering the enormous racial disparities in the enforcement of the drug laws in this country (in New York State for instance, 94% of drug inmates are black and hispanic), the effect on the poor and minority communities is enormous. The people who will be most adversely affected by this law are the very ones that need the most help in achieving a quality collegiate education.

A nationwide coalition of student governments at such institutions as Yale, Amherst, Brandeis, and Union College, as well as campus and other national organizations such as NAACP, ACLU, NORML, RecondsiDer, Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP), and NOW, is currently appealing to Congress to get these students back in school. In the meantime, SSDP has created a scholarship fund for student expenses which would otherwise be covered by government aid.

- **The Event:**

God: The Band will be headlining a benefit concert at Union College on November 3, 2001, to help raise money for SSDP's HEA Scholarship Fund. There is a suggested donation of \$5, but none will be turned away. The concert is hosted at The Coffeehouse, by WRUC, Union College's radio station, The Union College NORML/SSDP Chapter and The Society.

- **When:**

Saturday, November 3, 2001, at 6:30pm.

- **Where:**

Union College, Schenectady, New York, in the Coffeehouse on the corner of Lenox Road and Knot Street.

**For more information about the event or directions, please contact:
Nelson Abramson, President of the Union College NORML/SSDP Chapter at:
518-377-9107 / norml@vu.union.edu, <http://virtual.union.edu/~norml>**

**For more information on the HEA Scholarship Fund, please contact:
Students for Sensible Drug Policy at:
202-293-4414 / ssdp@ssdp.org, <http://www.ssdp.org>**