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### Marijuana Legalization

Marijuana has affected many lives in times today. We can see and hear of many individuals these days smoking marijuana even though it isn't legal in most places. Some say that the reason why they may smoke is to help them with stress, to relax, to “escape” and more. But, it still comes down to the individuals themselves. In The article “Marijuana Should Not Be Decriminalized” by Damon Linker talks about how marijuana should not be decriminalized. He mentions that alcohol and tobacco are more dangerous than marijuana. In the newspaper article “Pot Legalization Could Save U.S 13.7 billion a year, 300 economists say” by Jillian Berman , it talks about how legalizing marijuana can save a lot of money especially for the government. And the article on Pot guide known as “Does Legalizing Cannabis Reduce Crime?” It talks about how many crime rates have dropped over time due to the legalization of marijuana. On the other hand, the article “Marijuana Legalization Is a Bad Idea for the United States” by Noel Merino states that legalizing marijuana would not be a good idea. It mentions how marijuana can have negative effects on an individuals body. Marijuana should be legalized. Although marijuana can have a negative impact on an individuals body, Marijuana is less dangerous than alcohol and cigarettes, gives the government needed revenue and prevents crime.

Marijuana has been around for many years. It evolved in Central Asia originally but then spread to more areas. Marijuana can also be known as Cannabis, pot, weed, or hemp plant. The

main reason why marijuana was so popular back in the day was because it was used as a medicine. People didn't necessarily use it to get high as they do in times today. The hemp plant's fiber would also be used to make clothes, ropes, paper and the seeds were used for food. Tetrahydrocannabinol also known as THC, was found in this plant. THC is the main thing that gets you high and has effects on your mind. There are different kinds of Marijuana, but the most common classification is Medical marijuana and Recreational weed. " In the 1830s, Sir William Brooke O'Shaughnessy, found that cannabis extracts could help lessen stomach pain and vomiting in people suffering from cholera." As seen on [history.com](https://www.history.com), Also dealing with recreational weed, a Greek historian known as Herodotus described the start of getting high. Hashish was mostly used in the Middle East and Asia. It was smoked through a pipe and was a more purified cannabis.

Marijuana should be legalized because it is less dangerous than alcohol and cigarettes (tobacco). In the article " Marijuana Use Should Not Be Decriminalized", Damon Linker argued that "the pleasure of smoking marijuana differs from the pleasure of using alcohol or tobacco". (Linker, 1) This is mentioned to emphasize the difference that marijuana has from alcohol and tobacco. These three things have different effects and purposes, but alcohol and tobacco are being related and put in a similar category to show that they are almost the same in the amount of damage they can do unlike marijuana. In relation, he also mentioned Richard Lowry who stated that marijuana should be categorized between alcohol and tobacco on one hand and caffeine on the other hand. Lowry mentions "alcohol and tobacco kill hundreds of thousands of people a year, but there is no such thing as a lethal overdose of marijuana." This goes to show that alcohol and tobacco both have proven to have killed many people but no one has died from marijuana. It

is impossible to overdose on marijuana. Even though you can't overdose on tobacco as well, it has still caused many deaths all around. This being said, tobacco and alcohol have done much more damage but are still legal, while marijuana is considered a drug, doesn't do much damage and is illegal in most areas.

Another reason why marijuana should be legalized is because it will give government needed revenue. This means that legalizing marijuana would cost less and save the government a lot of money. In the newspaper article “Pot Legalization Could Save U.S 13.7 billion a year, 300 economists say” by Jillian Berman it mentions that “ if the government legalized marijuana it would save 7.7 billion annually by not having to enforce the current prohibition on the drug. The report added that legalization would save an additional \$6 billion per year if the government taxed marijuana at rates similar to alcohol and tobacco.” (Berman, 1) This helps prove that legalizing marijuana will be beneficial and can help especially for tax payers and tax revenues and other consequences that come as a result of prohibiting marijuana. Another thing mentioned in this article is “ the economic benefits of pushing pot into mainstream commerce have long been cited as a reason to make the drug legal, and the economists’ petition comes as government officials at both the federal and local levels are looking for ways to raise funds. The majority of Americans say they prefer cutting programs to increasing taxes as a way to deal with the nation’s budget deficit — marijuana legalization would seemingly give the government money without doing either.” (Berman, 1) This means that the government would still be economically beneficial. Americans would not even have to take the extra step in raising funds and cutting programs because the government would receive more money either way if they just simply legalized marijuana.

Last but not least another reason why marijuana should be legalized is because it prevents crime. In the article "Does Legalizing Cannabis Reduce Crime?" Found on Pot Guide, it mentions that legalizing marijuana would cause less crime because people would not go out of their way to illegally get marijuana and get caught. If it was legal that would not be a problem. For example, it says "if the drug is legalized, they claim, people won't have to resort to illegal means to get it, sending crime rates through the floor." (Potguide Staff, 1) This means that if the marijuana was legal, people wouldn't be getting arrested and obtaining marijuana would not be known as a "crime". "In a 2014 study, researchers from the University of Texas looked at 16 years of data from states that had legalized medical cannabis. The evidence flatly contradicted the claim that cannabis legalization causes crime, and suggested that it may even decrease criminal behavior." (Potguide Staff, 1). Studies over the years have shown that violent crime rates dropped when marijuana was legalized. Even though some crimes stayed the same there was still a difference. The article mentioned how "the murder rate fell by 13 percent, overall violent crime fell by 10 percent and burglaries fell by 6 percent". (Potguide Staff, 2) The overall impact is that legalizing marijuana can keep an individual from doing and committing crimes. There have been other legal things that caused more damage and crimes than marijuana as mentioned earlier.

Opponents of this topic may say that marijuana should not be legalized. One of the reasons is because of the negative effects it can have on an individual's body. In the article "Marijuana Legalization is a Bad Idea for the United States", it mentions the problems with marijuana use. "Marijuana's "high" can affect these functions in a variety of ways, causing distorted perceptions, impairing coordination, causing difficulty with thinking and problem

solving, and creating problems with learning and memory. Research has demonstrated that among chronic heavy users these effects on memory can last at least seven days after discontinuing use of the drug.” (1) This part of the article shows that smoking marijuana can affect an individual's body needed to function on a daily basis. It can cause people to forget things, think straight and much more. Although these negative effects can be crucial when dealing with situations on a day to day basis, these effects are mostly short term. As mentioned in the quote it said “up to seven days” meaning that it can wear off and these effects are not life threatening forever. Unlike alcohol and cigarettes as mentioned before, they cause long term effects on an individual's body which can sometimes lead to death, marijuana can affect an individual's body as well but only for a short period of time. No deaths have been reported because of marijuana use. Marijuana is even being used medically now to help people with illnesses and sickness so even if there are “negative impacts”, marijuana isn't harmful in the same way as alcohol and cigarettes. Also seen in the cartoon below it even shows that alcohol caused a death while marijuana hasn't. The artist is trying to show that alcohol is much more dangerous than marijuana. Marijuana has not “killed” anyone. Just because marijuana is a drug it is classified as a crime and acts of violence but it doesn't do as much damage as alcohol so how is alcohol legal and marijuana illegal in most places?



"THAT'S THE LIQUOR TALKING"

Dealing with the question of why marijuana is illegal and alcohol is legal even though it is more dangerous takes us back to the time of prohibition. The reason can be found in the article on Weed blog known as “Why is Alcohol legal and not Marijuana?” During the time of prohibition the intention was to reduce alcohol related crimes but improve health and hygiene in America. People would eventually make their own at home even though “homemade brews” led to many deaths. If people drank illegally they would get away with it half of the time because the jails would have already been crowded with bootleggers. Harry Anslinger, was the first Federal Bureau of Narcotics commissioner. He claimed that “marijuana could lead to insanity if it was used enough. Anslinger had no scientific data to back up his claims, but his propaganda convinced the majority of the public to side with him. Anslinger helped usher in the creation of the Marijuana Tax Act of 1937, which effectively criminalized the possession and sale of marijuana. Anslinger was also prejudiced against African Americans and Mexicans who used marijuana and he developed the law to persecute them. This means that ever since Anslingers claim that insanity could be a cause of marijuana, they made marijuana illegal. It is still classified

as a Schedule I drug. The article also stated that “There is no good answer, no rational reason, no logical explanation for why alcohol is perfectly legal and marijuana isn’t. History repeats itself, but we should learn from our past mistakes. Prohibition didn’t work during the Roaring 20s, and it won’t work in the 21st century either.” Basically the meaning is that if the issue with alcohol was that way for years it is highly unlikely to change.

Marijuana should be legalized. Factors like marijuana being less dangerous than alcohol and tobacco, marijuana giving the government needed revenue and preventing crimes help prove that there are benefits of legalizing marijuana. Even though marijuana can have negative effects on an individual's body, they are not long term and marijuana can still be used to cure illnesses. All in all marijuana legalization would make a lot of things easier and the benefits it has and positives definitely outweigh the negative impacts.

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