

# legalizing marijuana essay sample

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The issue of legalizing marijuana, also known as Cannabis Sativa, has been controversial for a long time, and has become even more so in recent years. Cannabis Sativa is a plant that has been used for a variety of purposes by many cultures for thousands of years. Not only does the Cannabis Sativa plant produce Marijuana, it also produces Hemp. Hemp was used to make food, clothes, shoes, ropes and paper, making it a very useful cash crop. Legal up until 1937, Marijuana was used in America for recreational use, medicinal, and industrial products as well.

In the 1960's the government's war on all drugs was created putting Marijuana in the same category as Cocaine, Heroin, and Morphine. Today Marijuana remains a schedule one drug to the federal government. With new medical studies and evidence emerging over the last decade about Cannabis, some states are beginning to rethink their stance on this issue. Over twenty states have now either decriminalized or legalized for medicinal use. Two of those states have legalized recreational use for adults starting in 2014. With the many benefits Cannabis can provide for the economy, industrial, and medicinal uses, it should be legalized.

One of the issues most overlooked in the legalization of Cannabis, is the beneficial influence it would have on our economy. Some people against legalization argue there would not be any benefit and Marijuana would only burden our already weak economy. Writer for U. S. News & World Report, David Evans says, " The argument that we can tax and regulate marijuana and derive income from it is false. The increased use will increase the multitude of costs that come with marijuana use. The costs from health and mental wellness problems, accidents, and damage to our economic

productivity will far out strip any tax obtained.” I do agree that there should be some concern with accidents happening from impairment, but strongly disagree legalization would damage the economy.

The United States spends somewhere around thirty billion dollars annually to fight the failing war on drugs. Half of that money is used for Marijuana alone, costing tax payers fifteen billion every year. The U. S. government wastes too much money arresting, prosecuting and criminalizing small-time marijuana offenders, to no avail. Instead, the states should redirect resources to prosecuting more serious crimes, and funding more effective drug awareness and treatment program (“ Decriminalizing”).

Legalizing Cannabis would free up that money to use for other things needed. Taxation on the sale of Cannabis, similar to alcohol and tobacco, would also generate more revenue for every state. New businesses would open up creating jobs across the U. S. such as Cannabis coffee shops, gardening/cultivating supply stores, and paraphernalia shops. All these benefits combined and the many others not listed, would give a substantial boost to the economy.

Many people are not even aware that Cannabis Sativa also produces Hemp and has thousands of beneficial industrial uses. A store owner that sells Hemp products, Dana Begins, says, “ By some estimates, hemp is used in more than twenty five thousand products worldwide. There are so many uses for it, it seems silly we are not taking advantage of it” (Johnson). Hemp can be used to make things like paper, bio-fuels, building materials, clothes, and plastics. It would also be beneficial to the environment by replacing trees to make paper, producing cleaner burning fuels, and it is biodegradable.

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By allowing the cultivation of Hemp, thousands of jobs would be created across America making more money for the local economies. Because Hemp is illegal to cultivate, the U. S. has to import the product in when we could keep that much needed money here in the states. In Tim Johnson's article on hemp, he points out that advocates say American farmers are being shut out of a lucrative market. More than thirty countries grow hemp as an agricultural commodity. It is absurd that hemp is being imported into the states, but our farmers cannot grow it (Johnson).

Medical use of Marijuana is probably the most discussed topic of the legalizing campaign over the recent years. Some opponents of Marijuana say that it does not have any medical uses at all, and argue that Marijuana is only harmful and should remain illegal. Others for legalization have an opposite view that is starting to gain more recognition as time goes on. Around the late 1990's, some members of the nation's medical establishment began to acknowledge marijuana's potential health benefits. One respected health organization, the Institute of Medicine, released a report in 1999 which stated that "nausea, appetite loss, pain and anxiety can all be mitigated by marijuana (Medical).

In an article Drug Legalization, Advocates of medical marijuana say that in many cases it is the only treatment that has been shown to work. "It is a very effective medication for people who have failed to get good results from standard medications," says Ethan Russo, a neurologist who has studied medical marijuana, "and that is why so many people are devoted to risking their lives and career to get this drug"(Drug). There are many reports that Marijuana can help with conditions traditional medicines do not seem to help  
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with. Marijuana has also been a huge help to patients with Cancer, HIV/AIDS, Glaucoma, and Insomnia.

With a lot of prescription medicines being expensive, Marijuana would be a cheaper alternative to buy if people chose to do so. Based on research, studies, and experience, I believe Cannabis should be legalized. As we move forward it is becoming clear that Marijuana is not as harmful as it has been portrayed over the last sixty years. All the false propaganda that was made up centuries ago is being proved by science to be quite harmless. The drug war costs billions of dollars each year, and is pretty much a huge failure. If legalized, our weakened economy would be spared millions of dollars and generate millions in revenue and jobs for every state.

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