

End the prohibition on marijuana assignment

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END THE PROHIBITION ON MARIJUANA AND INDUSTRIAL HEMP Outline Thesis

Statement: Legalization of industrialized hemp and marijuana benefits our economy, decriminalizes a 35 billion dollar a year industry, creates jobs, and makes sense for the environment. I. Marijuana has been illegal in the United States since the Marihuana Stamp Tax Act was enacted by congress in 1937

A. A Brief History B. Marijuana Cash Crop II. The prohibition of marijuana contributes to a black market system, which increases violent crime, and contributes finances to the criminal element. A.

Violent Crime B. Underground Drug Trade's Negative Contributions C. The Marijuana Policy Project III. Marijuana prohibition is costing the Federal Government roughly 2 Billion dollars per year on the Federal level, and up to 5 billion dollars on State and Local levels. A. The War on Drug's Impact on Taxpayers B. Possible Tax Revenue C. Marijuana Arrests D. Marijuana Widely Available IV. Industrial hemp has over 25, 000 uses. Hemp products are widely used, legalizing hemp creates jobs for America's farmers, and is beneficial to the U. S. economy. A. Industrial Hemp Facts

B. Industrial Hemp's positive environmental effects

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Marijuana has been illegal in the United States since the Marihuana Stamp Tax Act was enacted by congress in 1937. Since then, between the " period 1965-2007 there were 19, 342, 363 arrests for cannabis offenses, 89% of them for the possession of a small quantity of cannabis. " (St. Pierre, 2008) Much like the prohibition of alcohol, prohibiting the use of Marijuana has failed. It is time to put an end to this failed policy by legalizing Marijuana. At an estimated \$35. billion, marijuana is by far the largest cash crop in the United States when compared to the

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average production values of other crops from 2003 to 2005. (Gettman, 2006) According to a national survey conducted in 2010, America had 17.4 million who admitted to using Marijuana. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration,, 2011) The fact that this drug is so popular and accepted amongst our population is proof in itself that legalization of the drug could work. Why should we continue to make Marijuana illegal? The use of it seems to make people happy, and does not pose a serious threat to our nation.

In fact, it only stands to make America a better place, creating jobs, infusing cash into our economy, and simply making people feel better. Prohibition: Creation of a Black Market The prohibition of Marijuana creates a dangerous black market for the drug, which in turn causes an increase in violent crimes. The Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement affairs summarizes it here: " The cross-border flow of money and guns into Mexico from the United States has enabled well-armed and well-funded cartels to engage in violent activities.

They employ advanced military tactics and utilize sophisticated weaponry such as sniper rifles, grenades, rocket-propelled grenades and even mortars in attacks on security personnel. DTOs have openly challenged the GOM through conflict and intimidation and have fought amongst themselves to control drug distribution routes. The results led to unprecedented violence and a general sense of insecurity in certain areas of the country, particularly near the U. S. border. Between January and September 2009, there were 5,874 drug-related murders in Mexico, an almost 5 percent increase over 2008 (5,600). (United States Department of State, Bureau for International <https://assignbuster.com/end-the-prohibition-on-marijuana-assignment/>

Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, 2010) If the government chooses to continue to criminalize marijuana, these black markets will continue to wreak havoc on our country. Illegal grow operations are heavily armed, and populated by dangerous criminals, that will protect their multi-million dollar crops by any means necessary. Prohibition is leading to the harm of American citizens, as well as the destruction of our wilderness areas. . The War on Drugs is an outdated policy, it isn't working and it's time for a change. The Marijuana Policy Project states: " Because of marijuana prohibition, America's largest cash crop is grown exclusively by unregulated criminals, often in environmentally damaging locations such as national parks and wilderness areas. Such problems are virtually unknown with legal, regulated crops such as tobacco or wine grapes. " (Marijuana Prohibition Facts, 2008) Legalization's Effect on The Economy The legalization of marijuana could possibly create annual tax revenue of 2. billion if taxed normally, and 6. 2 billion if the government used similar tax rates that are currently used for alcohol and tobacco sales. (Miron, 2005) " Police prosecuted 858, 408 persons for marijuana violations in 2009, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's annual Uniform Crime Report, released today. The arrest total is the second highest ever reported by the FBI. " (Armentano, 2010) This one statistic alone is absolute proof that current drug enforcement programs and policies are not effective.

Marijuana is widely available to the masses, arrests are at an all-time high, and there is a potential to make billions of dollars through taxation.

Marijuana is accepted all over the world, and is by far the most popular illegal drug. A recent Gallup poll showed that 50% of Americans favor the

legalization of marijuana. (Newport, 2011) Through the legalization of marijuana tax revenue is increased, drug dealers are put out of business, our judicial system is free to concentrate their resources on more serious crimes, and public safety is increased. The U. S. ederal government spent over \$15 billion dollars in 2010 on the War on Drugs, at a rate of about \$500 per second. (Office of National Drug Control Policy, 2011) The prohibition of marijuana accounts for approximately 7 billion dollars of that amount. (Miron, 2005) These are billions of dollars that could be used much more productively. Industrialized Hemp The legalization of industrialized hemp is also long overdue. It does not make sense that hemp is illegal in this country. The plant provides many benefits that would prove beneficial to the United States.

Here are some facts: * “ The United States is the only industrialized nation that does not permit the production of industrial hemp (Dupong, 2009) * “ Other countries, such as Canada, allow hemp production due to its cultivation advantages and growing demand for hemp products in the North American market” (Dupong, 2009) * “ the United States is a leading importer of hemp products” (Dupong, 2009) * “ Currently, the North American hemp market exceeds an estimated \$300 million in annual retail sales. ” (Dupong, 2009) These facts all illustrate the obvious.

That it makes absolutely no sense what-so-ever to prohibit the growing of hemp. There is an established market for hemp products in this country. . The legalization of hemp will create jobs, and has a positive impact on the United States economy. It also proves to be beneficial to our environment. Industrialized hemp has many commercial uses, and is used to create over
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25, 000 products. (North American Industrial Hemp Council, Inc. , 1997)

Marijuana is a plant that grows from the ground, we as a people should not be restricted in the use of this natural resource.

Survey As a part of my research, I conducted an informal survey of my peers. I targeted groups on both sides of the issue including conservatives and liberals, republicans and democrats, anti-drug groups, and legalization groups. I received 45 responses in total. This survey should prove beneficial to establishing that the legalization of marijuana is something that a majority of people are becoming more receptive to. It indicates that there is growing sentiment that anti-drug campaigns aren't really effective, and that legalization makes sense.

The survey also shows an overwhelming majority of people know several citizens who actually use the drug, illustrating how widely available it is. The survey also shows strong support for the legalization of industrialized hemp as well, which proves that there is strong belief that industrialized hemp's legalization could be beneficial to the United States economy. Conclusion I believe the legalization of marijuana is better for the economy, the environment, public safety, and the well- being of our country's citizens. It is a natural resource that should have never been criminalized in the first place.

It is time for us as a nation to recognize the positive effects this plant can provide us, and move forward with legalization. What kind of society do we live in, where we allow " the powers that be" to regulate the use and consumption of a plant? It just doesn't make sense to me. Outdated policies

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formed out of government corruption need to be reviewed and changed.

Why should something so popular and beneficial continue to be criminalized?

The one thing that makes America different from anywhere else is our undeniable sense of freedom.

People in a free society should be allowed to make their own decisions whether they use marijuana or not. The fact that our government spends so much time, money, and effort into the prohibition of a plant that grows naturally from our soil, just seem ludicrous to me. Doesn't it seem illogical to continue to waste time and money keeping marijuana an illegal drug, when it so obviously is not working? Couldn't our economy use any help it can get right now? Prohibition didn't work for alcohol, and we as a society of freedom loving individuals should demand that the prohibition of marijuana be lifted.

We are criminalizing a large portion of our population. Prohibition efforts do nothing more than increase violence and produce un-necessary casualties on both sides. Marijuana isn't going anywhere any time soon. The public wants it, and millions use the drug illegally today. Legalization is just common sense, and that's why I support the legalization of marijuana and industrialized hemp. We need to stop taking money and jobs away from our economy. We need our government to stop infringing upon its citizen's most basic rights. The time for legalization is now. Bibliography

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