

Legalizing marijuana

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The argument of legalizing marijuana in the United States has been an ongoing situation for many years. Since the use of marijuana is becoming legal in certain states, the argument has continued to rise. The debate is both for medicinal and recreational use. Medicinal use is supported much more than recreational use. Like any other argument, there are many pros and cons. A total of five uses of marijuana have been discovered. These uses include, hemp fibers, oil from the seeds, the seeds for food, a medicine, and for its narcotic properties (Marijuana Today). The two most popular uses, whether legal or not, are medicine and for its narcotic properties.

Revenue boosts within the government would become possible if marijuana were to become legalized more so for recreational use. It is believed that the legalization could form many new taxes that could be applied to both distribution and sale. The money gained from these taxes could go towards roadwork, new parks, and many other necessities.

For example, in Colorado, analysts concluded that taxing marijuana could arise between five and twenty two million dollars annually (Drug Rehab). Since costs are continuing to rise and revenue has yet to start increasing, legalizing and taxing marijuana would be an effective way to put money back into the government so that it can be applied to places that are in need of improvement.

Criminal justice and law enforcement would become dramatically more effective. If marijuana were to become decriminalized, police officers will be able to focus on more dangerous crimes. Also, the police officers will have much more time and money on their hands. Decriminalizing marijuana could

free up spaces in prisons and allow prosecutors and judges to focus on the more violent crimes (Drug Rehab). One out of six people are in jail for non-violent drug offenses. Prisons are definitely overcrowded. It is very costly to keep people in prison (Marijuana Today).

A study estimated that the government could save up to almost nine billion dollars per year if marijuana were to be legalized for recreational use. In addition, the safety controls taken to distribute marijuana are not reliable. In most cases, it is bought off the streets and there is no possible way to know exactly what is being received. Marijuana being sold on the street tends to be more dangerous and is cut with substances which side effects are sometimes unknown when they are mixed together. Legalizing marijuana would allow for the distribution process to be controlled and allow each person to know what exactly is being received (Drug Rehab).

Medicinal use of marijuana is the strongest argument that supporters use towards getting legalization in the U. S. Marijuana can be used as a treatment for many health conditions and/or diseases. Marijuana treatment targets specific conditions. Cancer chemotherapy often causes extreme nausea and vomiting. With treatment, the active ingredient THC (found in marijuana) reduces vomiting, nausea, and alleviates pretreatment anxiety. Having AIDS often causes a low appetite and loss of lean muscle mass. With treatment, appetite is almost immediately improved. Being treated for pain and muscle spasms, the muscle spasms are reduced and depression may be relieved.

Glaucoma is a progressive form of blindness due to increased pressure inside of the eye. If treatment is used, pressure within the eye is reduced. Asthma

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can also be treated which can help open up the lung of an asthma attack victim. If marijuana were to become legalized, it would make it much easier for patients to be able to obtain the drug. Also, scientists will be able to more openly perform research to study the drug more in depth and confirm the medicinal purposes of the drug (Marijuana Today).

Marijuana is safer than alcohol. It is not lethal by overdosing (Drug Rehab). Every day, over 550 people die from alcohol abuse and less than twenty die of drug related causes. Alcohol is the product that is legal yet more people become addicted to it and die from it (Drug Rehab). Even though it is illegal to drive under the influence of marijuana, almost all driving under the influence accidents are caused by alcohol or a more serious drug. Legalizing marijuana could possibly reduce the amount of alcohol consumption and the social costs that come along with it (Diehm).

Marijuana becoming legal will allow more people to avoid the use of alcohol and use marijuana. Many people avoid marijuana since it is illegal. Since alcohol is legal, more people are going to use it. Legalizing marijuana would allow people to start being more open with the drug and not use alcohol to the same extent that it is used today.

Although there are many positives to legalizing marijuana, there are also some negative aspects. Even though marijuana is not as addictive as other harder drugs such as cocaine and heroine, it still has an addictive nature. Long-term use does lead to addiction. Research has shown that approximately ten percent of users will develop dependence of the drug over time. The withdrawal symptoms are not as severe as harsher drugs but they range from irritability to anxiety.

People that oppose the legalization argue that the savings that would arise from legalizing marijuana would be counteracted by the cost of treatment for the users that would eventually become addicted to marijuana (Drug Rehab).

Marijuana has many effects that are both immediate and long term. Immediate effects include loss of restlessness, excitement, hallucinations/paranoia, impaired coordination, delayed movements, moods swings, increased appetite, and impaired ability. When someone is under the influence of marijuana, these immediate effects can be harmful if the person is not in the right environment. The long term effects include the loss of brain cells, increased risk of lung cancer, chronic bronchitis, energy loss, and slow confused thinking, apathy and blood vessel blockage.

When used by adolescents, emotional development, delay of puberty, and the monthly cycle of females can be disrupted or delayed. Since marijuana can eventually cause physical dependence, the withdrawal symptoms include nausea, insomnia, irritability and anxiety. The overall physical effects of marijuana are diarrhea, cramps, weight loss or gain and impaired sex drive (Marijuana Today). Just like any other drug, there will be immediate and long-term effects. Marijuana's effects are not nearly as severe as other drugs.

The use of marijuana can affect your brain, lung, heart and mental health. Users tend to have horrific memory. Most people think that it is just a common stereotype of “stoners” but it is proven to be a fact. Surprisingly, levels of carcinogen in marijuana are fifty to seventy percent higher than tobacco in the lungs. This is caused because people who smoke marijuana inhale much deeper than people who smoke cigarettes. This increases the

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amount of time that the lungs are exposed to cancer causing chemicals. A person's heart rate increases from twenty percent to one hundred percent for approximately three hours after smoking marijuana.

This highly increases the risks of heart palpitations, arrhythmias, and heart attack. Smoking marijuana is very high risk for the elderly and people with pre-existing cardiac conditions. Studies have shown that there is a distinct link between the use of marijuana and mental illnesses, such as depression and schizophrenia. It is not known if marijuana actually triggers the conditions or not. It is definitely known that marijuana is a factor in mental health (Drug Rehab).

Marijuana should be legalized for both medicinal and recreational use. Although there are negative aspects, things that are legal have worse negative effects than marijuana. The amount of opportunities that could open up for medicinal marijuana are incredible. Many people that are suffering can finally receive a treatment that will ease their pain and help them. People can finally gain access to something that will benefit their health.

Recreational use would benefit the government in more ways than one. Money can finally be put back in our government and get put into things that need improvement across the whole country. Also, adolescents would start using marijuana more than alcohol. The less people consuming alcohol, the less addictions and further problems will be formed. Even though marijuana potentially has long-term effects, there are many positive effects as well.

The movement to legalize marijuana is becoming a reality in some areas. For local governments, law enforcement officials, the judicial system, and addiction treatment specialists affected by the shift, there would be drastic changes that could improve for each group. Medicinal and recreational marijuana both have positive and negative effects, but they will both have a positive impact for America. Financially, legalizing marijuana would be the best way to increase revenue from taxes. Overall, marijuana should be legalized.