Four reasons why marijuana should be legalized argumentative essay sample

Introduction

Behind alcohol and tobacco, marijuana is considered as the third most popular recreational substance not only in the United States, but also in some parts of the world. The thing that differentiates marijuana from the other two is its legality. This paper will draw the four most important arguments about marijuana that justifies the reason for making it legal. The four areas of concern whether the government has the strong grounds to prohibit marijuana, health implications and benefits, economic value and social significance will be explored in order to make a strong stand to imply its legalization. In the past decades, marijuana was frowned upon by the society because of the myths that surrounds its use. However, several debates have shown the light to the issue because of the rising awareness about marijuana's questionable reputation. More and more people are now accepting the idea of legalizing marijuana because of the factors that constitutes a valid argument of its legality. This paper will present the most significant attributes that will justify why marijuana should be legalized.

Overview

Since the 1990s, the public there has been a steady increase in support of legalizing marijuana not just for medicinal, but also for recreational use (Cohen). Skeptics view the idea of Marijuana legalization as major tolerance of the society to drug addiction. Considering the intoxicating effects of illegal drugs to users and the alleged relationship of illegal drugs to crime (Thoumi), portions of the population are adamant if legalization should ever be considered in the first place. However, recent the recent survey of 1, 000

adult correspondents conducted by The CBS News Poll on November revealed that public is evenly divided in its opinion about the legalization of marijuana (Cohen). On a more personal note, marijuana should be legalized on the grounds of reducing the number of people incarcerated for its possession and use. In addition, legalizing marijuana will eliminate several problems such as the need for costly random drug tests among government and private employees promote cannabis for its health benefits and the federal government will earn billions of dollars in tax.

Reason 1: No Government has the Universal Rights to Enforce Laws against Marijuana

It is safe to say that marijuana is the most misunderstood illegal drug; there are several allegations of its effects to the user such as intoxication of the brain, addiction and cause of aggressive behavior. However, the notion about marijuana was based on biased perceptions and lack of understanding. This is also the reason that governments in several countries see it as potentially harmful and impose laws that lacks logical and justifiable basis because they do not understand the nature of marijuana. Laws exist for a reason, but ultimately it stands on the ground of status quo and claims that laws against marijuana will prevent the people from bringing harm to themselves (Office of National Drug Control Policy). The common notion about marijuana laws is that people under the influence of marijuana will potentially harm themselves and to larger the culture. However, the laws encompassing an argument about self-harm is always questionable. This is because any idea about the government dictating what is good or bad for the people is indicative of suppression of free will and violation of universal

human rights (United Nations). It stipulates that everyone has the right to participate in cultural life, democracy and to exercise their own free will. The current laws also mentioned that cannabis has a high attribution to crime rates. However, the government cannot deny that the crimes involving marijuana are more on trafficking, cultivation, selling and smuggling, which are mostly done by drug syndicates. Therefore, the laws does not clearly stipulates how marijuana was linked to hideous crimes such as murder, homicide, manslaughter, let along robbery and kidnapping. There is no clear manifestation that smoking marijuana has anything to do with major crimes in the country. Therefore, there is no reason that it should be illegal. If marijuana is legal, drug syndicates would be deprived of any money-making opportunities and the authorities would save time and effort trying to crack them down.

Reason 2: Enforcing Laws against Marijuana Constitutes Racial Discrimination

If the government is serious enough to enforce the law against the use and selling of marijuana, it should have been done in a racially neutral manner. It is a no surprise that the majority of people arrested and incarcerated for possession, use and selling of marijuana are consist of minorities such as African-Americans and Mexican-Americans. America has a long history of racial discrimination and profiling dating back from 1642 when a white American named John Elkin admits killing an American Indian, but he was acquitted in all three trials for the reason that the court refuses to punish a fellow white colonist (Zinn). In America today, about 32 million Americans admitted being a victim of racial profiling mostly consists of Native, Asian,

Hispanic, African, Arab, Persian and Muslim Americans (Amnesty International USA). Issues of racial profiling and discrimination are closely related to the incarceration and arrests of minorities on the grounds of marijuana possession, use and selling. There is a large gap between the population of minorities and white Americans arrested for marijuana, which constitutes an idea that law enforcement are using marijuana as a reason to discriminate the minorities.

Statistics indicates that there are only 195 white Americans in every 100, 000 reported marijuana related arrests, while there are about 598 African-Americans in every 1000, 000 cases are arrested for marijuana (Anderson). This means African-Americans are 248% most likely to be arrested for marijuana than white Americans, while both race shares the same number of users and involvement in marijuana use and possession in the country. This huge gap in terms of arrest ratio and probability is an indication that the law is not favorable to the minorities and becomes an instrument of an old culture that looks at people based on the skin color. Therefore, in order to reduce the incidents of discriminative arrests due to marijuana it should be made legal. There is no clear pattern why law enforcers target blacks and Latinos for marijuana; the most obvious reason is racial biases.

Given the statistical data suggesting that there are actually more young white males that use marijuana than Latinos and blacks, it becomes more ironic that there are more blacks and Latinos being arrested for marijuana than white Americans. The answer is quite clear, racial discrimination and profiling is the cause of such discrepancies. This notion of racial discrimination is an old culture that the people of America should long been

forgotten. The idea of white supremacy is a cultural animosity that creates a bad reputation to the people of America. Since marijuana is among the issues that depicts such negative cultural picture, it is about time America should consider legalizing marijuana because it will not only improve America's social perception, but will also lessen the dilemmas about racial discrimination in the country.

Reason 3: Legalizing marijuana means Billions of Tax Dollars and Federal Savings

On average, Americans spends about US$5 billions on marijuana every year or equivalent to 1% of the GDP, it is almost the same amount that alcohol contributes to the country's GDP (Daryal). The only problem is that the marijuana revenue mostly goes into the pocket of drug syndicates and mafias because they comprise the largest portion of distribution in marijuana market. On the other hand, the federal government admits that the war on drugs is very expensive and the cost is untimely due to the current budget-crunch and federal deficits. In average each U. S. state spends about US$1 billion just to enforce marijuana laws. The top spenders in marijuana law enforcement are New York with US$3 billion, Texas with US$2 billion and the rest of the states spends between US$45 million to US$1 billion annually (Reuteman). Asa Hutchinson, the former DEA director mentioned in a CNBC interview that the cost to fight marijuana is worth it and the people should not mind the cost, but instead look into the benefits it would bring to the country.

However, it is quite difficult to see what the benefits really are, law enforcement says that criminalizing marijuana will reduce the number of

accidents involving people under the influence of marijuana, reduce incidents of violence caused by intoxication of the drug, reduce the number of drug dependents and prevent the health risk that accompanies the use of marijuana. But these arguments to criminalize the use of marijuana are rather vague and unproven. Alcohol also intoxicates the drinker, which brings higher probability of vehicular accidents. Tobacco poses health risk to smokers after chronic use, but they are considered legal? Therefore, the reasons given to criminalize marijuana are just common thinking that are actually unjustified. It is ironic that the given effects of marijuana to the users that made it illegal are synonymous to the effects of alcohol and tobacco, yet they are legal.

The government should consider turning the cost to revenue by legalizing marijuana and grab the earning opportunity from the drug syndicates. Furthermore, pot prisoners are costing America about US$1 billion annually (Armentano), which could have been used to improve the educational or health system of the country. Legalizing marijuana has a better budgetary implication that it's continuous prohibition. Taking out marijuana from the illegal status would mean US$7. 7 billion in total federal expenditure that could be used for national development and other programs that would have a more long-term benefit for the people (Miron). In addition, legalization of marijuana sales would contribute significant tax revenues ranging from US$2. 4 billion to US$6. 2 billion if going to be taxed like alcohol and tobacco (Miron). It doesn't make sense that the government are spending too much to fight marijuana, when in fact the law and law enforcement efforts are inadequate in keeping marijuana from kids. Government surveys indicate

that senior high school students admit that getting marijuana as easy as ordering hamburgers and fries in the counter. This means that despite the billions of dollars that the government throw away to combat marijuana it still able to find its way under underground to the hands of young Americans. The common argument is that offenders have used marijuana and that it became the cause of their crime, but this argument is difficult to validate because scientific researches on the effect of marijuana to user are not strong enough to support the claim (Austin).

Reason 4: Health Implications does not Prove the Risk

For some people that haven't been able to get a glimpse of what marijuana looks like, it is a dry and shredded mix of seeds, stems, leaves and flowers of the hemp plant with a scientific name Cannabis sativa. The plant contains an active ingredient identified as THC or delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (Drugabuse. gov). This chemical is said to be have a harmful effect on the brain specifically on the cannabinoid receptors that creates the feeling of being " high". Furthermore, smoking marijuana would cause the increase of cannabinoid receptors in brain that would interfere with memory, concentration, thinking, movement coordination, time and sensory perception and pleasure. Marijuana was also studied for its addictive properties; the long-term use of marijuana could lead to abuse, which would manifest in compulsive seeking of the drug despite the known harmful effects to body and social functioning.

However, most people's perception about marijuana is only locked down on its negative health implication when in fact cannabis is a potential drug that

offers more beneficial effects. First, addiction is a broad term that can be associated to several things. Tobacco for example is also addictive, yet it is legal. In addition, the percentage of people being addictive to marijuana is a lot less than those of tobacco and alcohol. Research has indicated that only 9% of marijuana users became addicted while 32% of tobacco smokers and 15% of alcohol drinkers actually became addicted (Howard). Therefore, the probability of a person being addicted to marijuana is lower than the legal substances such as tobacco and alcohol. Furthermore, the long term effects on respiratory, reproductive and nervous system of marijuana use are also present in tobacco, so there is no reason that tobacco is legal and marijuana is not. THC in Cannabis can be used to relive pain, promote appetite, reduce nausea and glaucoma and ultimately, the drug offers broad-spectrum of relief that cannot be found in other plants (Eddy).

The 2010 Congressional Research Service report for Congress provided evidence that marijuana is beneficial to health and possesses significant medicinal value. Such claim that marijuana is beneficial cannot be ignored because it is the congressional research arm that justified the argument of its medicinal properties and not just by any pro-marijuana advocates. The Congressional report mentioned that in certain States in the U. S. marijuana was proven to have a positive effect on patients with chronic illnesses. In Rhode Island for instance marijuana is being used to treat Cancer and HIV/AIDS since 2006, while Michigan added Hepatitis C, multiple sclerosis and glaucoma to the list of ailments that marijuana can significantly contribute to relief (Eddy). The proponents of medical marijuana determined therapeutic value of marijuana in relieving varieties disease related illnesses

such as nausea, spasm, muscle spasticity, chronic pain and anxiety (Eddy). In addition, marijuana was regarded in successfully eliminate the debilitating symptoms caused by the aforementioned illnesses and even the side effects of chemotherapy.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, marijuana is only illegal because the law makers misunderstood marijuana and its beneficial properties are neglected in favor of the negative perception. There are several things that the government has to see clearly to realize that marijuana is not so different from the legalized alcohol and tobacco. Fighting marijuana only creates an alarming situation of racial biases by law enforcement and not to mention the billions of dollars that they spent in prohibition campaigns. There is more in marijuana than what common people thinks. The cost of fighting it could actually mean billions of dollars in federal savings. That legalizing the market for marijuana means billions of dollars in additional tax revenues. Ultimately, marijuana is not just about health risks because it has significant properties that could be the key to the medical mysteries that scientist are still in pursuit for answers. The public is becoming more open to the idea of legalization and so should the government, otherwise the problem of fighting marijuana would remain a problem with a never ending search for resolution.

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