

War on drugs solution: legalization? argumentative essay

Law



Proposal

Much like the exclusion of alcohol back in the 20s which was aimed to evict various substances from our civilization, the drug war today has not only ruined its mission, but has made its mission unfeasible. Today various failures, whether it is the huge amount of money being spent erroneously or the increasing number of crimes and users, one thing is for sure; the war on drugs has fallen short. There is no doubt that the usage and misuse of drugs can cause a huge difference in the lives of the users and the others around them, however the "War on Drugs", is more of a failure than a success and one of the most effective solutions is, ironically, legalizing the light drug, marijuana, and distinguishing it from other illicit drugs being sold on the streets.

This research paper is intended to argue why the legalization of marijuana is the simple solution for the notorious war on drugs today as well as showing how society would actually benefit from the validation rather than the prohibition of some illicit substances.

Outline

Thesis Statement:

There is no doubt that the usage and misuse of drugs can alter the lives of users and others around them. However, the "War on Drugs" is more of a failure than success and one of the most effective solutions is, ironically, legalizing the light drug, marijuana, and distinguishing it from other illicit drugs being sold on the streets. I. Failures and problems raised by the war.

- A. Financial failures.
- B. Social/Human failures.
- C. Criminal justice system problems.
- II. Approach to marijuana legalization.
 - A. Marijuana's historical background.
 - B. Flexible strategies of legalization.
- III. Benefits of legalizing over banning.
 - A. Financial benefits.
 - B. Societal outcomes.
 - C. Improvement of the criminal justice system.

Ethics and politics are what make up the structure of a certain nation, so when a subject receives diverse reactions coming from two different standpoints it becomes controversial. The legalization of marijuana is a controversial subject; however, there are many encouraging arguments to support the idea. Taking a glimpse on its chronological milieu and the strategies of the legalization highlights the benefits of this validation as well as the problems elevated by the war on drugs. There is no doubt that the usage and misuse of drugs can alter the lives of users and others around them. However, the "War on Drugs" is more of a failure than success and one of the most effective solutions is, ironically, legalizing the light drug, marijuana, and distinguishing it from other illicit drugs being sold on the streets.

Looking back through history one cannot but notice the mistakes of most governments in choosing war as an approach to create peace. The war on drugs that the United States government tends to use on its own citizens has

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proven that war is not an applicable option anymore. In Ron Paul's farewell speech to the congress in 2012, he asks, " Why haven't we given up on the drug war since it's an obvious failure and violates the people's rights? Has nobody noticed that the authorities can't even keep drugs out of the prisons?" The failure of the war appears in three aspects; financially, socially, and the problems with the criminal justice rise. As for financial failure due to the drug war; the United States paid at least \$1 trillion on the drug war, while it cost U. S. taxpayers at least \$51 billion in 2009.

As a response to that drug production; trafficking, consumption and overdoses have increased. As for the society's sacrifice in that war, many casualties have been reported due to some errors and/or corruption in the system of the law enforcement directed towards the handling of the drug war. The article " The Drug War's Hidden Economic Agenda", by Blemenson and Nilsen in 1998, presents the case of Donald Scott, a Californian millionaire, who was wrongly accused of cultivating numerous marijuana plants on his five million dollar ranch. Despite many investigations, failed efforts to verify the anonymous tip, and information that Scott presented slight danger of violence; his ranch was totally raided by LA sheriff's department armed with heavy weaponry and dogs.

In response to the raid and out of fear and self-defense, Scott armed himself with a gun and was unfortunately shot by agents in front of his wife. Moreover, no trace of marijuana plants or other illicit substances were found (para. 17). Let's suppose Donald Scott did have numerous marijuana plants, that shouldn't be such a threat to the public and authorities to the point that they raid him on a military style basis and cause his unfortunate death. As <https://assignbuster.com/war-on-drugs-solution-legalization-argumentative-essay/>

for the problems that rise from the criminal justice system, Ron Paul questions “ How can making our entire society a prison solve the problem?” where “ Drug arrests have more than tripled in the last 25 years, totaling more than 1. 63 million arrests in 2010. More than four out of five of these arrests were for mere possession, and forty-six percent of these arrests (750, 591) were for marijuana possession alone” (para. 7).

One should think about it, it’s totally illogical and immoral to place a nonthreatening and non-violent person behind bars for the simple possession or use of marijuana for its recreational or proven medicinal value. Not to mention that prison is a place for hardcore drug addicts and criminals to suffer in. Adding to that, the incarceration of first time drug possessors could lead to serious repercussion of the violator and thefamilymembers. Moreover, the convicted could suffer many consequences such as losing his/her job, properties, college aid and shockingly losing the right to vote even after being released. Humankind has held the use of the cannabis plant properties for over 5000 years; whereas the false image and misconceptions built by prohibitionists have lasted barely seventy.

The period in which society has looked upon marijuana positively and approvingly is almost seventy-five times longer than the period in which it was deemed to be considered as a public enemy. The earliest known recordings of the medicinal use of cannabis date back to first century A. D., while nomadic tribes used the drug for spiritual purposes as early as the Stone Age. It may be shocking to know that the United States Constitution was written on paper made from hemp and that the first marijuana law, dated back to 1619, called farmers to plant “ Indian hemp seed”.

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But the nasty business, the War on Marijuana, began in 1930 with the foundation of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, a Division of the U. S. Treasury Department. It was not until 1937, with the passage of the Marihuana Tax Act, that the United States actually restricted recreational and medical use of marijuana. Then after the Second World War joins president Nixon who targeted all drugs and treated drug users as some sort of terrorist aliens.

Nixon signed the controlled substances act in 1970, placing marijuana as a schedule I drug disregarding the most comprehensive study done by the Shafer Commission, which recommended that: " Possession and non-profit transfer of marijuana be decriminalized, stating, in part, that the actual and potential harm from using it " is not great enough to justify intrusion by the criminal law into private behavior, a step which our society takes only with the greatest reluctance"(Johnston, 2011, para 3). Changing the public's thought towards " addictive, lethal weed" prohibitionists won by creating a war, but have never yet got close to winning the war itself.

Nowadays public views towards marijuana have been shifting to end prohibition due to the truth that has been found concerning that plant, the potential benefits that escort the use of cannabis, and its medical accomplishment and impossible harm. After this awareness citizens from all over the world have been fighting their governments demanding a reform on policies towards the failing drug war. One of the possible ways to win this war is ironically legalizing the light drug marijuana and conducting a new policy, based on credible findings, concerning the whole cycle from production to consumption.

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According to Mcvay 1991, to construct a prototypical scheme for legal marijuana it is essential to disregard the systems for alcohol and tobacco since the handling of these two drugs in America has failed. Therefore the systems concerning the two legal drugs, alcohol and tobacco, should be altered in a very critical way that acts into discouraging people from using them. After that reformation, placing the marijuana system in a similar way, controlling it from its production till its dispersal and everything that goes in between to developing an alarming attitude and public awareness towards the exploitation and first use of this drug, would work. Such a structure with strategic discouraging technics transmits the idea that marijuana is no longer adequate when permissible than it was when prohibited (par 4).

As discussed previously, a controlled, organized and studied format can prove that marijuana legalization holds benefits over the alleged disadvantages. Improvements appear financially to the government, socially to the people and in the criminal justice system. On the public level, aspects concerning legalizing the drug from a financial view have been positive where the RAND Corporation's Drug Research Center conducted a study revealing that the income coming from taxes to the state are more than half a million dollars ranging to \$1.5 billion depending on the market's request (Abramsky 2012, p. 18).

As for the society, the hemp plant can offer a large number of efficient materials like decomposable plastics, renewable energy source and most importantly medicine. After several credible scientific researches, cannabis was found to have various medicinal uses from treating backaches reaching to cancer cures where recently " a pair of scientists at California Pacific
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Medical Center in San Francisco has found that a compound derived from marijuana could stop metastasis in many kinds of aggressive cancer, potentially altering the fatality of the disease forever”(para. 1).

Marijuana can be a substitute for many pharmaceutical pills that actually make takers feel so numb and make them pass out to sleep. It is even offered in edible ways like cookies and cakes and even lollipops in order to avoid the light harm smoke inhalation. Employment is also an outcome, for the process needs investors, growers, harvesters, and medical marijuana dispensaries for the sales. With cannabis becoming legal, users would be protected from the black market’s dealers who open doors to other destructive drugs. Regarding the criminal justice system, unfortunate cases like Donald Scott’s would be eliminated. Other than that the focus of the DEA agents and police officers would be on bigger and more severe issues that deal with the processing and trafficking of hardcore drugs on the streets.

One can not just stick to what the government releases of information about the plant since it is known that governments tend to hide information for their personal benefit disregarding the misconceptions created in the minds of the people. Several researches have proven the mistakes of the government in classifying cannabis as illegal with no medicinal value and attacking it by a war it’s not supposed to be in.

In closing, Dr. Ethan Russo in his article, “ Cannabis for Migraine Treatment”, said it best: “ There can be no doubt that a plant that has been in partnership with man since the beginnings of agricultural efforts, that has served man in so many ways, and that, under the searchlight of modern chemical study, has yielded many new and interesting compounds will
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continue to be a part of man's economy. It would be a luxury that we could ill afford if we allowed prejudices, resulting from the abuse of Cannabis, to deter scientists from learning as much as possible about this ancient and mysterious plant" (para. 4).