

Marijuana legalization or prohibition

Law



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White House, it is the most commonly used recreational drug in the United States. It has been proven to be less harmful than alcohol, which is currently legal; and prohibition caused a black market to arise leading to an increase in an organized criminal activity. The fight against those organizations is costing a great amount of money and was cause for the loss of many innocent. While there are strong arguments in support of prohibition there are stronger arguments in support of the legalization if marijuana than there are counterarguments to keep the substance illegal.

When comparing the Alcohol Prohibition in the 1920s and compare that situation with the current situation with the legal status of marijuana, we can see that a repetition of history is occurring. According to Douglas McVoy, at the beginning of prohibition, the consumption of alcohol fell, however eventually it increased again. Since the drug was illegal and only the black market could sell it, a significant amount of tax revenue was removed and crime rates increased in addition to become more organized.

Consumption, illicit production, and distribution grow exponentially; therefore courthouses and prison systems were exhausted from such an increase in crime due to illicit alcohol. Government spent great amount of money devoted to enforcement, in fact, the annual budget of the Bureau of Prohibition went from \$4.4 million to \$13.4 million during the 1920s, while the Coast Guard spending on Prohibition averaged over \$13 million per year. (McVoy). These are some reasons that proved that alcohol prohibition was a failure to the United States.

Comparing the alcohol with the cannabis prohibitions. Marijuana is the most used recreational drug in the United States, as reported by the White House (Marijuana). One could say that after a long term of prohibition, the consumption rates have increased. Like in the 1920s with alcohol, there is now a huge black market that sells marijuana and its essentially lead by organized criminal groups. According to Steve Nelson, Marijuana offenses accounted for 48.3 percent of all drug arrests in 2012 (Nelson) and more than 80 percent of marijuana arrests are now for simple possession (Kilmer, etc. . United States government spends enormous amounts of money in the fight against drugs and the criminal groups grow more and more each day. Alcohol prohibition was considered a failure and, actually, we are experiencing some situations today that the United States faced in the 1920s. Since before marijuana was prohibited, the drug was used in a medical way. It has been proven that cannabis used as a medicine can relieve chronic pain, which is caused by a significant number of pain-producing illnesses.

Marijuana can assist many mental health problems, such as attention deficit disorder (ADD), post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and depressions. It can also be used as an analgesic (painkiller) or an anti-inflammatory drug for autoimmune diseases, diseases that arise when the body cannot create an appropriate immune response to substances or tissues present normally on the body. Such diseases could be rheumatoid arthritis, complex sympathetic dystrophy, and so on (Bearman). California was the first state in the United States that legalized medical marijuana.

One of the negative results of this legalization is the significant increase of individuals seeking treatment for marijuana abuse or dependence (Kilmer, etc.). This could mean that there has been an increase in consumption. One interpretation of this phenomenon is that people which use marijuana as a recreational drug rather than a medical drug, seek treatment not to deal with a substance abuse but to manage a legal problem (Kilmer, etc.). Even though marijuana can be used as a medical supplement, this does not mean it do not have secondary effects on human 's bodies.

Marijuana can also get to be harmful. In fact, THC (The major component in cannabis that gets you " high") by binding to receptors in the basal ganglia and cerebellum can disrupt coordination and balance of the body. Therefore doing complicated tasks such as driving, participation in sports, or learning is affected. One of the long lasting effects cannabis can produce on you is psychotic disorder such as schizophrenia. This illness alters a person's ability to make good judgments, understand reality, communicate or think clearly.

Memory can also be affected by marijuana consumers, studies has proven that THC alters how information is processed in the hippocampus, a brain area responsible for memory information (National drug Institute). According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, marijuana also affects your cardiovascular system. After a few minutes of inhaling marijuana smoke, the heart rate, which is normally between 70 to 80 beats per minute, may increase by 20 to 50 beats or even double in some cases. Mixing marihuana with other drugs can amplify this effect.

This means that a person's risk of heart attack during the first hour after smoking is about four times his usual risk. (National Institute on Drug Abuse) Before legalizing and decriminalizing the use and possession of marijuana, a regulation system should be instituted, that, like Douglas McVay stated, should not be the same as systems used during the legalization of tobacco and alcohol. Those models of legalization taught the world and the United States a lesson of how not to regulate the use of these drugs (McVay).

Cigarettes and alcohol advertising companies spend significant amounts of money to promote the use of their products which ultimately contributes to many health problems and eventually the death for many users. An example of a non-regulated drug after it was legalized was after the repeal of alcohol prohibition, where the death rate from liver cirrhosis increased dramatically (McVay). To prevent the abuse of marijuana, governments should build a system to regulate its use. An important part of the system build for legalization according to RAND Corporation is the price the drug is going to have.