

The the legal
marijuana industry is
valued at



The legalization of recreational marijuana in Colorado has had an array of positive effects for the state both financially and socially as well. These successes can be translated to the federal level. In Colorado the legal marijuana industry is valued at a high \$1. 3 billion dollars. Dispensaries also brought jobs to the state and cultivated a unique culture attracting tourists from across the country and the world.

More interestingly the potential social effects could be more beneficial. Alcohol related accidents and deaths saw an almost immediate decline as drinkers put down the bottle and grasped the blunt instead. This culture is still forming, as more people use marijuana and turn away from harder drugs. Surely a federal legalization would have all of the same benefits, only of a degree a hundred times greater or more. A decline in the 100, 000 estimated alcohol deaths a year in the U. S would be reason enough to pursue country wide legalization alone. The additional income could be a tremendous afterthought. The inception of the war on drugs by Nixon in the 1950s criminalized marijuana, a rather trivial hobby for adults, as a schedule one drug on the same level as cocaine and heroin.

The Fbi helped create the association of marijuana with criminality, and particularly with African Americans, and hispanics. This association placed dealers behind bars for life for the non-violent crime of selling weed to consenting adults. It was the criminalization of marijuana in part along with heavier drugs that is to blame for the mass incarceration crisis that imprisoned over 2 million Americans a majority of them black and brown. Although many of their lives are altered forever, it is not too late to prevent a similar fate for the next generation.

It is with a sense of tragic irony that dispensaries in Colorado generate more profit than dealers 30 years ago without even an inkling of legal consequence. Immediate federal decriminalization of marijuana should be a top priority of any administration looking to win the favor of Americans. Waiting for states to decriminalize then legalize marijuana legally is not sufficient.

States under overwhelming conservative control will be unable to do so and inevitably continue the cycle of needless incarceration. Marijuana should not be treated as an excuse to lock away Americans and must be legalized at once. A \$1.3 billion price tag is impressive. The legal marijuana industry is very fond of its green. But while this profit seems impressive, experts estimate the vast majority of the sticky icky was bought on the illicit market. A shocking 87% of it, valued at \$53.3 billion.

This is the figure of sales outside of the legal market, with risk attached. The value of a regulated weed industry with no legal repercussions would likely grow. Additional tax revenue can also be used to fund a variety of social programs.

In Colorado the revenue is put towards school construction, health care, law enforcement, and substance abuse programs. On a national level the possibility of a legal marijuana industry in each state presents a very lucrative market. A report presented by the Huffington post estimates that the entire industry could be worth more than \$36.8 billion. The additional tax revenue that would bring to states could mean the difference between much needed programs being cut. Care for the elderly, funding to public

schools, and drug education programs would be the likely recipients. The revenue could also be used to fund infrastructure programs. The financial future of a nationwide legal marijuana industry looks bright.

Class one or schedule one drugs are illegal because they have no medical uses, no benefits attributed to research, and carry a high risk of addiction. Almost all of this is false when concerning marijuana. However, the catch 22 is that research that could recognize marijuana as a medical alternative to prescription drugs is prohibited because not enough research has been done. Despite this fact, marijuana has been approved in more than half of all U. S states for medical use.

It is frequently used to treat glaucoma, seizures, arthritis, and general pain and anxiety. CBD the other component found in marijuana in addition to THC, can be used to improve appetite and treat nausea for chemo patients. Marijuana is often used for the same reasons as alcohol, but carries a much lower risk for dangerous and erratic behavior. Furthermore, the possibility for addiction is extremely low when compared to alcohol and overdoses from marijuana are almost unheard of. Going forward the risks of marijuana on mental health is unknown and needs to be further researched.

However to claim that the plant offers no health benefits is preposterous and a out of line with reality. Ultimately Congress as a representational body should reflect the American opinion. The American opinion on marijuana has evolved over the past 40 years. In 1970 Congress passed the controlled Substances Act, which established marijuana as a schedule 1 drug along with the likes of cocaine and LSD. A bipartisan report by a group of scientists

appointed by Nixon himself recommended that the drug be rescheduled. Nixon of course ignored the experts' advice. The Nixon administration along with congressional members pushed for American public to associate marijuana with the hippie culture and African Americans which sowed animosity towards the leaf. in 1970 only a brave 12% of Americans said they would support the federal legalization of marijuana, according to a Gallup poll.

In a 2017 poll about 60% of Americans said that they supported marijuana legalization. The fact that the majority of Americans have a favorable view of marijuana and feel that it should be legalized on a national level is remarkable. This trend is only growing as younger Americans are even more overwhelmingly supportive of marijuana legalization.

Legislators are out of touch with Americans when it comes to the legalization of marijuana. Americans want access to regulated, safe marijuana with all of its medical and recreational benefits. Weed should be decriminalized immediately to prevent the further incarceration of a generation of non violent smokers. Its further legalization would be a much needed organic stimulant to the economy.