

# Legalization of marijuana and its medical benefits essay example

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It is a widely debated topic, whether marijuana should be legalized or not. The supporters of it consider that medical benefits of marijuana makes it important to legalize marijuana and that it will bring greater good to the society. We will discuss the medical purposes of marijuana and give evidence for why supporters advocate legalization.

### **Advantages of marijuana in medical purposes**

In United States of America, 23 out of 50 states and DC has legalized the use of marijuana for medical purposes. The proponents of use of marijuana for medical purposes argue that it is a safe and effective treatment for diseases such as AIDS, cancer, pain, glaucoma, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy and other medical conditions. .

In Alaska, marijuana is approved under the condition of cachexia, chronic pain, cancer and epilepsy and other diseases such as seizures, HIV, AIDs and nausea. Other conditions are subject to approval by Department of Health and Social Services in Alaska.

David Fratello, the director of communication for American Medical Rights is currently sponsoring ballot initiatives in six states to allow medical use marijuana. In his views, marijuana should be legalized and it is mere politics of drug war which intervene progress in legalization of marijuana. According to him, scientific and medical texts from history prove the medical properties of marijuana and government is unnecessarily committed to maximize the fear in those who might benefit from using it. Modern scientists have proved that smoking marijuana may reduce nausea and reduces pains especially for cancer patients going through chemotherapy and patients of glaucoma.

He adds in his arguments that thousands of patients and their families and

their doctors have previously experience the medical benefits which they derived from marijuana. Those patients and doctors have contributed in researches and book literature and hence prove that the phenomenon is real. He insists that the use of marijuana and the decision regarding the need of using it should be in the hands of the doctors, and secondly medical patients who use marijuana for medical purposes and who have legitimate medical reasons should not have risks of getting arrest or the shame of public embarrassment. He concluded his argument by saying that the laws should be changed and marijuana should be legalized.

A very ground breaking use of marijuana is that it can be used to treat an extremely dangerous eye disease, glaucoma and can be used to prevent it. Glaucoma increases the pressure in eyeballs, and damages the optic nerve and increases severe chances of losing the vision.

According to National Eye institute, marijuana decreases the pressure inside the eye, and lowers the intraocular pressure for people suffering from glaucoma and its use include that it may prevent blindness. Opponents of medical marijuana argue that it is too dangerous to use, lacks FDA-approval, and that various legal drugs make marijuana use unnecessary. They say marijuana is addictive, leads to harder drug use, interferes with fertility, impairs driving ability, and injures the lungs, immune system, and brain. They say that medical marijuana is a front for drug legalization and recreational use.

In the state of California, marijuana is legalized under approved conditions of AIDS, anorexia, arthritis, cachexia, glaucoma, and migraine and muscle spasms with a specified possession limit. Possession limit makes legalization

easier and ensures that misuse of the drug doesn't occur. In California, the primary caregiver cannot have more than eight ounces of dried marijuana or more than six marijuana plants. For larger amount, a recommendation has to be taken from the physician. Qualified patients who have a valid identification card and recommended primary caregivers in California cannot be made subject to criminal for purchase or marijuana.

Despite the fact that several arguments are against the legalization of marijuana, it goes without doubt that there have to be reasons that support the legalization. Firstly, it is arguable that that legalization of the drug would be an avenue for the governments to raise revenue. That is; government can impose taxations on these drugs to increase its revenue. From Lowler Joe's article, legalization of marijuana could raise more than \$ 28 million annually in Maine basing on the tax revenue that Colorado generates after legalizing the drug (Lowler 13). Therefore, if governments legalize the use of marijuana, they are like to generate more revenue from taxes on the drug. The governments can use these increased revenues in developing infrastructure, improving disaster management and paying civil servants among others. Additionally, people argue that the tax revenue collected from the sale of marijuana would outweigh the social costs of legalizing the drug(Ruschmann 28). There should be legalization of marijuana because most of the efforts of governments to combat the use of illegal drugs have proven futile for long. Therefore, instead of the governments using their resources in attempting the combat use of the illegal drugs, they can channel the resources to legalization of marijuana that would be more profitable in terms of the revenues raised. There should be legalization of

marijuana because of its medicinal value in cancer and glaucoma among others. Several states and governments have argued for this factor despite the fact that the issue of the medicinal value of marijuana also has conflicting conceptions from research (Stimson).

## **Why Marijuana should not be legalized**

The opposing view is that marijuana's legalization will only bring damage to the society in various forms, and advocated who support legalizing; ignore the disastrous affects it may have to on the society. We will discuss various factors to support why marijuana is a threat to the society, not only for health but as well as morals. Bennett's article discussed below especially sheds light on a number of sensitive issues related to legalization of marijuana. Most people in the world today have either smoked, seen or heard about marijuana either in medical or recreational settings. For others, the drug remains an issue to be solved while for other people it is a drug that should continually gain usage among humanity. Whether, one has smoked marijuana or not, the common ground concerning the drug is its illegal status both locally and internationally. However, the illegal status is gradually shifting with countries and states striving to legalize the drug. As such, there are continual debates on the legal status of the drug around the world. Despite the illegal status of marijuana, people still use the drug with less regard to the economic and social consequences of the drug. In many countries such as the United States, there exist divided opinions among the states concerning the legal status of the drug with some of them calling for the legalization of the drug. However, this is not a new debate because there

have been continual debates on the legalization of the drug with both opponents and proponents of this motion using factual evidence and emotional appeals to substantiate their claims.

Marijuana is one of the commonly abused drugs in the world and the move to legalize it will have significant impacts on individuals and governments. Therefore, the existence of these debates has informed my opinion to develop the statement of the argument that there should be no legalization of marijuana.

### **William J Bennett's Views**

William J Bennett has expressed his views in the article "Drug Policy and the Intellectuals" in which he has opposed the idea of use of marijuana for any purpose. In his words, it is a big lie that legalizing marijuana would solve all the problems. In his article he raised the questions such as how to define the extent to which marijuana should be legal, and should marijuana be stocked at local pharmacies and convenience stores which a few blocks away from schools where kids have easy access to it? As a secretary of Education, he expresses his views that the drug of marijuana is widely known to impair memory and concentration and damage the attention span, then why would such a drug be of any medical use? He also argues that by making the consumption legal, the drug use and consumption will go way above the current level and make it easier to obtain for everyone. He refutes the arguments of advocates of legalization of marijuana by saying that the real question under consideration is what does it cost not to enforce laws for legalizing marijuana? He states that price of legalizing drugs that Americans

would have to pay is really high and it will reach an intolerable level. People will have more drug-related accidents, driving accidents at highways and airways, loss in productivity and hospitals will be full with drug emergencies. Students of schools would be on dope and this means they will eventually drop out damaging the entire education system. Use of drugs even can mean premature births if pregnant mothers consume it. To summarize his arguments he is trying to convey that it is crucial to realize what serious damage can be done if marijuana was legalized.

He raised another crucial point, which he believed to be unrelated to costs or benefits of marijuana. He raised the issue that drug use, especially the use of heavy drugs, destroys the character of a human, by destroying the autonomy and dignity. Drugs use burns away the sense of responsibility in a person and subverts productivity. He pointed out that the founders would recognize a citizenry that perpetually remains in a drug induced haze and who doesn't bode well for the future of the self-government. The people advocating liberalism, the libertarians, do not accept this or like to hear this, but the truth remains bitter that everyone knows this that has seen drug addiction closely. People don't realize that drug users don't only hurt themselves, but also hurt parents, families and relationships and destroy all the relations including blood ties and friendships. Drug are not only a threat to life, but a threat to mind as well, and anyone who has a value for life will never contempt for drugs.

## Discussion and Conclusion

We have seen two sides of the coin; legalizing versus not legalizing marijuana and what would the implications be? Legalizing marijuana has a lot of advantages and it can help prevent serious illness and can be a matter of life and death for families. On the other hand, legalizing it would have damaging effects on the society such as children and teenagers.

However, the uses of marijuana in medical purposes provide enough support to prove that marijuana should be legalized to a limited extent for medical purposes. We can also use the states which have legalized marijuana as evidence that they are doing just fine, and no accidents or unpleasant event has occurred since the legalization, if the marijuana is legalized for limited usage strictly for medical use only. For example, in Colorado, where marijuana was recently introduced, has no sign of descending into chaos or having less productivity overall in the State and people only use it for medical purposes. In September, medical sales exceeded recreational sales. So far, none of the states have reported any adverse effect of legalizing marijuana to be used as a medicine. But it is important to note that marijuana is only legalized for medical purposes and still remains illegal for other uses.

The percentage of people supporting marijuana for medical use has been increasing over the past 25 years. In surveys done in 1990, only 16% people supported the legalization compared to 50% in recent days.

We also do not have enough evidence to claim that legalization will increase substance abuse or consumption of marijuana as licensed patients and caregivers can only have access to it, that too in a certified and limited



amount. To ensure this practice regulations are necessary and is important to ensure that marijuana is only sold through licensed sellers and only sold on prescription and recommendations from the doctors. The correlation between regulation and safety of public is a common sense. Just as customers are protected by inspecting the restaurants for health violations, regulating marijuana will also ensure consumers who really need it get a good quality product and harmful activities do not occur.

## **Annotated Bibliography**

Marijuana should not be Legalized- An Article for the Commonwealth publication | Area51 [Web log post]. (n. d.). Retrieved from <http://pitzevans.wordpress.com/2011/11/21/marijuana-should-not-be-legalized-an-article-for-the-commonwealth-publication/>

This article talks about the issue of legalization of marijuana by governments. Firstly, the author introduces the topic by defining the status of marijuana internationally and locally. With that in place, the author introduces the issues of debates on the alteration of the current illegal status of marijuana across the world. Additionally, the author suggests that the marijuana is one of the most commonly abused drugs across the world. As such, the author proposes that in discussing the debates on legalization of the drug, the fact that the decision would significantly affect individuals and governments should not be neglected. Moreover, the author argues in favor of the argument that there should be no legalization of marijuana. The authors also address points that support the legalization of the drug. As such, I will use the author's concepts to discuss my argument of not

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legalizing marijuana.

Lawlor, Joe. " Legalizing Marijuana could Fund Gov. LePage's Anti-Drug Bill." McClatchy - Tribune Business News Mar 20 2014. ProQuest. Web. 7 Nov. 2014.

Lawlor Joe's article talks about how legalizing marijuana could fund the LePage's anti-drug bill of the US Government. This article presents the fact that legalization of marijuana would have beneficial effects to the government and individuals. The author outlines the possible benefits of legalization of marijuana in Maine. Additionally, he outlines some of the possible benefits of legalizing marijuana with relation to Maine. Therefore, I will use this article in my essay to counter argue the debate that there should be no legalization of marijuana.

Graham, Gillian. " Pot Legalization Lights Up in South Portland." Morning Sentinel Nov 05 2014. ProQuest. Web. 7 Nov. 2014.

Graham Gillian talks about pot legalization in South Portland. The author presents an issue of marijuana legalization in South Portland. From the article, the author presents the two issues of legalizing and not legalizing marijuana and not legalizing it. As such, he talks about the split result in the quest to legalize recreational marijuana in Maine. That is, whereas, voters in South Portland narrowly approved in support of the legalization, those in Lewiston soundly rejected the idea. Therefore, with such conflicting arguments and campaigns, the author goes ahead and highlights some of the views of both the proponents and opponents of the issue. In my essay, I will use these views to develop my argument on both the opposing and supporting sides.

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Mack, Alison, and Joy, Janet. Marijuana As Medicine: The Science Beyond the Controversy. Washington, DC, USA: National Academies Press, 2000. ProQuest February. Web. 7 November 2014.

This book talks about marijuana as medicine. The authors analyze the various instances when marijuana can be of medicinal help. Additionally, they analyze the harmful effects of marijuana. In their analysis and discussion, the authors present the relationship between marijuana and pain, AIDS, cancer, muscle spasticity, glaucoma and neurological disorders. Lastly, the authors discuss the legal issues related to the use of marijuana. In my essay, I will use the concepts from this book to discuss the opposing views concerning the argument that there should be no legalization of marijuana.

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Marijuana should not be Legalized- An Article for the Commonwealth publication | Area51 [Web log post]. (n. d.). Retrieved from <http://pitzevans.wordpress.com/2011/11/21/marijuana-should-not-be-legalized-an-article-for-the-commonwealth-publication/>

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