

Legalizing drugs

[Health & Medicine](#), [Drugs](#)



Drug use is widely regarded as one of the most serious health problems in our country today. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (2002) " an estimated 13. 6 million Americans were current users of illicit drugs in 1998, meaning they used an illicit drug at least once during the 30 days prior to the interview. This represents 6. 2% of the population 12 years old and older. An estimated 1. 8 million (0. 8%) Americans aged 12 and older were current users of cocaine in 1998 and an estimated 4. 1 million people met diagnostic criteria for dependence on illicit drugs in 1998, including 1. 1 million youths aged 12-17. " (Roberto A. Trevino, p. 1) Research also addiction to drugs have been discovered to cause cardiovascular diseases, stroke, cancer, hepatitis and lung disease. It is because of this reason that the United States has waged an all out war against drugs. The only issue is whether we are adopting the right position on the issue of drugs. Introduction Drugs are not per se harmful to our body. In fact, drugs serve very important function in our body. They perform two important functions in our body. The first is that drugs help alter the normal body functions. There maybe situations where it is essential for physicians to alter a person's body functions such as when a woman is about to give birth. Normally, the baby is expelled from the mother's womb without the use of any drugs. However if the baby is relatively big or the mother is weak, it may be necessary to make use of drugs to help the mother give birth. Thus, anesthesia is administered which causes a numbing effect on the mother's body. Drugs help reduce the pain the mother is feeling to facilitate the birth of the child. Second is that drugs may also be used for treatment and cure of diseases. When the body is not performing

according to its normal process, it is necessary to take drugs or medicines so that the body will return to its normal condition. Thus, a person has fever, he takes medicines such as antibiotics and vitamins to help treat and cure his illness. There are a number of drugs that are available in the market. These drugs which are prescribed by doctors are used to cure our various diseases. Problem arises because of the heavy and the increased use of this drug among the consumers. The heavy and increased use of drugs has resulted to addiction among some people. As a result, drug abuse is widely regarded as one of the most serious health problems in our country today. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (2002) " an estimated 13. 6 million Americans were current users of illicit drugs in 1998, meaning they used an illicit drug at least once during the 30 days prior to the interview. This represents 6. 2% of the population 12 years old and older. An estimated 1. 8 million (0. 8%) Americans aged 12 and older were current users of cocaine in 1998 and an estimated 4. 1 million people met diagnostic criteria for dependence on illicit drugs in 1998, including 1. 1 million youths aged 12-17. " (Roberto A. Trevino, p. 1) Drug abuse is an important social issue because of its relationship with public health issues. Research also addiction to drugs have been discovered to cause cardiovascular diseases, stroke, cancer, hepatitis and lung disease. Drug abuse is also connected with addiction and violence. In the 26th of June, the world celebrated the 21st anniversary of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. The date marks the time when the UN member nations expressed their determination to strengthen their action and cooperation to achieve the goal of creating drug-free societies. Twenty one

years have passed but it seems that we are far from achieving our objective. In view of the problem involving the use of drugs, two policies have been proposed by different groups. Each group argues that its own proposed policy will provide the proper solution to the problem of drug use. The first policy is to wage an all out war against drugs. For this purpose, laws were passed prohibiting the use, sale, manufacture, importation of drugs. Passing laws against drugs however will not stop it from flourishing. In fact, according to them, these laws have even contributed to the great increase in the price of illegal drugs in the black market. The people greatly benefited by these laws are gangs and syndicates. It is estimated that the price of heroin and cocaine in the black market is 100 times greater than that the pharmaceutical prices of these drugs. Some also argue against drug prohibition because it contributes to the countless numbers of drug-related violence in the streets. It is common knowledge that drug users and peddlers are being killed either because of black market drug transactions, or cases of failure to pay drugs sold, or instances of eliminating the competition and cases of killing of suspected police informers. It is because of this reason that it is strongly suggested that instead of adopting a policy of prohibition, our legislators should instead legalize the use of drugs. It is argued that the most ethical and moral thing to do is to allow the individuals access to these drugs. The idea is for the state to directly sell drugs to consumers. Any other person who will sell drugs will be prosecuted and placed behind bars. The Reliable and Affordable Essay Writing Services The first reason is personal autonomy. The people should be allowed to decide on the use of certain substances that may help reduce stress and pain, and even enhance

physical and mental performance. In addition, removing the prohibition will significantly reduce instances of drug —related violence. Senseless killing because of drugs will be reduced if not avoided. Society will begin to accept use of drugs and the drug users will no longer have to hide from using it. Though the Right to Privacy is not mentioned in the US constitution, it is one of the rights recognized by the courts. A person's decision to use drugs is a privacy right which should not be interfered with by the state. What a person does in private should not be regulated by the State especially so if they do not harm other people. John Stuart Mill once said that the state had no right to intervene to prevent individuals from doing something that harmed them, if no harm was done to the rest of the society. There is therefore no reason for the government to criminalize drug use. The opponents of legalization of drugs argue that legalizing drugs will only make the problem worse since it will encourage more people to use drugs and it will lead to increase in drug use. The opponents of legalization of drugs think that once use of drugs is decriminalized people will not be able to control their consumption and use of drugs. They miss the point. It is precisely because of our country's prohibitionist attitude on drugs that encourages the very things we seek to avoid. It is general knowledge that people have the tendency to want to consume more alcohol or smoke tobacco when they are being prohibited from using them. Consider this scenario — because the possession of syringes is illegal, drug users are forced to share needles. This may result in the spread of diseases such as tuberculosis, influenza and even HIV or AIDS. (The Record, 1995, p. 1) Legalizing drugs will mean that people who use drugs will no longer have to hide. They no longer have to share needles. Use

of drugs will become safer, thus, spread of diseases will be avoided. Another argument is that legalizing drug would mean that children will no longer be lured into the illegal drug trade. Poverty is said to be one of the main reasons why young children are attracted into the drug business. When the government criminalizes drugs, the sale and distribution of drugs is only controlled by drug syndicates and drug dealers who operate in the black market. They earn huge money from their operation which lures young children who are desperate to earn money to support their family. Legalizing drugs would mean that the government itself will make sale and distribution of drugs in the market. The effect is that the demand in the black market will be significantly reduced. The operation of drug syndicates and drug dealers will be severely hampered since they will have to compete with the government. Young children will no longer be lured to the illegal drug trade. Legalizing drugs will also benefit the taxpayers. It cannot be denied that the war against drugs is very costly even for one of the richest and most powerful countries in the world. According to Law Enforcement against Prohibition (LEAP), the war against drugs has cost the country more than a trillion dollars since it started in the 1970s (Patricia Villers, 2006, p. 2). The United States is currently allocating millions of dollars from our national budget to aid the war against drugs. Those who are caught violating our drug laws are sent to prison which is also maintained using taxpayers' money. It is therefore argued that if the government will legalize use of drugs, the amount it currently spends to finance its war against drugs can be utilize for other social projects that will inure to the benefit of the taxpayers.