

How high can america get criminology essay

[Law](#), [Criminology](#)



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2013How high can America get? America has been in countless wars since our nation's birth, and for over a century now American citizens have been fighting on war on our own soil. No, this war does not involve nuclear warheads or guerilla warfare. The war currently on our homeland involves hallucigens and narcotics. President Nixon once said during his time as our nation's President, " America's number one enemy is drug abuse." Drug abuse has become a huge problem in our nation as it has dramatically changed millions of Americans both physically and mentally for the worse. Much speculation has been about how drug abuse affects our society, what our nation is doing to prevent this drug crisis, is the war on drugs worth fighting for, and should certain drugs be legalized? What exactly is drug abuse, and what are the types of drugs most commonly abused in the United States? Drug abuse, also called substance abuse, is when a person consumes too much of a certain substance, or amounts of the substance that have not been approved by medical professionals. There are four most commonly abused drugs in the United States. Those four are alcohol, marijuana, prescription drugs, and cocaine. Wilson 2Alcohol is a depressant, which is a drug that lowers the excitability of a person's body. In other words, it slows the body down. Consuming too much alcohol damages the heart, brain, liver, pancreas, lungs, and kidneys of a person's body. Consuming too much alcohol can lead to disrupted speech, a slowed thought process, a slowed reaction time, damaged hearing, impaired vision, muscle weakness, not being able to remember anything, and nausea. Recent studies show that approximately fifty percent of citizens living in the United States

that are between the ages of sixteen and sixty partake in consuming alcohol. Drinking reasonable amounts of alcohol has shown to be a stress reliever to most Americans, which is the reason why most people say they do it. However, there are some scary statistics that are involved with the consumption of too much alcohol. Almost fifty percent of people who were killed in a car accident were hit by a person who was driving under the influence. Alcohol can also affect an individual at work, as almost forty percent of deaths and almost forty-seven percent of injuries that occur in a regular working environment are caused by alcohol. Marijuana, also known as the gateway drug, is abused by roughly one hundred million American citizens each year. The usual intake of marijuana is by smoking it, and although it alone has never caused death, it can have some pretty severe side effects on an individual. These include a rapid heartbeat, reddish eyes, a dry mouth, an increased appetite "the munchies", and slowed reaction time from the brain. Many people who are marijuana users say they smoke it, because they experience a short period of relaxation and a good feeling about themselves. However, they must also experience the negative side effects listed above, which can't be too pleasant at all. Cocaine is a stimulant drug, which is a drug that can temporarily improve both an individual's mental state and physical state. Research shows that cocaine is abused by roughly five million Americans each year. The side effects of cocaine include restlessness of the body, inability to go to the bathroom, enlarged eyelids, fainting spells, irregular heartbeats, severe headaches, random sweating, irregular behavior, rapid speech, numbness throughout the entire body, nausea, severe stomach pains, and hyperventilation.

Overdosing on cocaine can also lead to death. Prescription drugs, which include painkillers and anti-anxiety medications, are also heavily abused in the United States. These drugs are the easiest to get a grasp of, as they are prescribed by your doctor. Hence this is where they get their name. Some abused prescription drugs include certain sleep medications, oxycotin, and cough syrup. Side effects of prescription drugs include mood swings, erratic behavior, mental cloudiness (slow at performing tasks), confusion, inability to sleep, getting too much sleep, being hyperactive, neglecting one's own hygiene and appearance, and the tendency to want to commit suicide. These are definitely some ugly side effects. Why are drugs becoming such a huge problem in the United States in today's world? It is mainly due to the fact that Americans are able to get a hold of these drugs from our neighbors down south and from other countries overseas. It is reported that almost eighty percent of cocaine consumed in the United States comes from Columbia, a relatively close county, located on the northern tip of South America. There are also Mexican drug cartels that smuggle certain drugs such as cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, amphetamine, and marijuana into our nation through our southwest border. These drug cartels are also trying to expand their drug tradeWilson 4market into eastern U. S. markets. These drug cartels didn't just come out of nowhere, as they have been operating for almost forty years! Besides the drug cartels, there are also diverse groups of criminals who traffic illegal drugs from all parts of the world. Some of these groups are located throughout Russia and smuggle a remarkable amount of ecstasy on commercial airlines travelling to the United States. There are also criminal groups located in Southeast Asia who ship

heroin into the United States on cargo ships. They aim for the Manhattan area, and once the heroin is delivered there, they make their drug trades all up and down the east coast. These certain drug trades have also been going on for about a century. Drug abuse is becoming a worldwide problem now! How is our nation handling the illegal drug conflict? In the past fifty years our nation has passed countless laws trying to help improve the drug condition in our nation. It all started with The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, which created the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). It gave the ONDCP the right to come up with a drug control strategy, and to create a drug-control budget. Following this was the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, which enabled research to be done on the availability, the use, and the treatment involving drug abuse. Then came Executive Order No. 12880 (1993) and Executive Orders Nos. 12992 and 13023 (1996), which allowed the head of the ONDCP to be the spokesperson to the President himself on any issue involving drug abuse. In 1997 the Drug Free Communities Act of 1997, which enabled funding to community unions who were fighting to reduce drug abuse among teenagers. Then the Media Campaign Act of 1998 was created, which allowed the ONDCP to create a media campaign for the purpose of alarming young people in the United States the bad effects of drugs. This is also known by most young people today is "Above the Influence" program. Also in 1998 the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act was created, which increased the ONDCP's agenda and caused more drug-related activities to be reported to Congress. The most recent act was the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 2006, which was simply an updated

version of the one created in 1998. Our nation's government has been putting forth an effort to stop the illegal drug abuse problem. Besides these legislations that have been passed, the Office of National Drug Control Policy list four possible solutions to tackling drug abuse. These four solutions are prevention, treatment & recovery, international partnerships, and enforcement. The ONDCP's motto is "committed to restoring the balance to U. S. drug control," and they believe that these four solutions will help them reach it. The ONDCP believes that they can end the substance abuse problem once and for all. Prevention involves preventing the use of an illegal drug before it actually happens. This has been proven to be the most effective way, as it has paved weigh for a healthy America. Approximately 1.7 billion dollars funded last year were funded to programs whose main goal was preventing the start of drug abuse. There are 2 prevention campaigns in our society today, as there is the National Youth Anti-Drug Campaign and the Drug-Free Communities Support program. The National Youth-Anti Drug Campaign is most popularly known as the "Above the Influence" program. Its goals are to prevent drug abuse among teenagers, and to encourage parents to talk with their kids about the negative effects of taking illegal drugs. The Drug-Free Communities Program (DFC) is a federal grant program, which has been around since 1997, thatWilson 6has funded countless community groups striving to prevent drug abuse among young people. DFCs have been effective as the amount of young people living in communities that have a DFC program have reduced uses of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana compared to those communities without a DFC program. If someone does become addicted to a drug then the second

method of the ONDCP treatment and recovery might be used, which becomes a lifesaving resource to drug addicts. Research shows that affective treatment programs allow an individual to counteract addiction while also regaining control of their own lives. Millions of determined Americans have made it through treatment programs, going from addiction to recovery. These individuals who happen to regain control of their lives go on to be responsible parents, as well as citizens to our society. They also go back and share their stories with other countless addicts who are struggling with abuse, and sometimes become lifesavers themselves. That is incredible! In today's modern world the United States has paired up with a total of 7 countries to protect democracies all around the world that drugs happen to be a threat to. These 7 countries include Afghanistan, Canada, the Caribbean, Central America, Europe, Mexico, and Russia. Together these nations are addressing issues such as the use, production, and trafficking of drugs as a top priority that any nation should prevent. The ultimate goal of this international partnership is to reduce the flow of drugs entering each of their own countries, and to reduce the need for drugs worldwide. Drug trafficking organizations, primarily located in Mexico, pose a great threat to communities all across America. That is why it is essential for them to be found and to be exterminated forever. This is where law enforcement comes into play. The ONDCP brings together law enforcement which includes Federal, state, and local enforcement agencies by providing them with valuable information and valuable resources to use against drug traffickers. This is what the ONDCP calls their High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas program, otherwise known as HIDTA. Through this program law enforcement

agencies from all levels cooperate with each other whether it be sharing intelligence or through actual support, in order to track down drug traffickers and dismantle them. The ONDCP currently has 28 High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas which covers nearly 60 percent of all American citizens living in the United States. That is also equivalent to 3/5ths of our country! The question most American citizens wonder is; is the war on drugs necessary? Those who say it is argue that drugs have a negative impact on our society, and the matter needs to be put to halt before it continues to get worse and worse. Those who say that the war on drugs is not necessary say that we spend way too much money and time on fighting the war on drugs, that we forget about other struggles that our nation is going through. America has many mixed emotions about the war on drugs. The Senate Force for a Drug Free America (believing that a war on drugs is necessary) once said " America is losing its battle against drugs. Drug arrests, drug seizures, and prison sentences for drug dealers are all up. But the price of drugs is falling, and availability is increasing. The police know we are losing the drug war. Pushers know it. Parents know it. Even school children-perhaps especially school children-know it." (18.) They also go on to say that " Drug use extends throughout our society. Rural areas are nearly as heavily impacted as big cities; college-bound Wilson 8students nearly are as likely to use drugs as a non-college-bound. 40 percent of doctors in our nation's hospitals are thought to use illicit drugs. Substantial proportions of young people who apply to join police forces show signs of cocaine use." (18.) After clearly expressing that they thing the war on drugs is necessary they go on to close with this, " We must decide as a nation, whether we really want to

win our fight against drugs, or just put up a good show. We believe we must win; we believe we can; and we believe we know how." (18.) Those who don't think the war on drugs is necessary, argue that our government spends too much money fighting against the cause, and that drug abuse takes the attention away from other desperate matters our nation faces such as poverty, unemployment, and drought. Statistically the United States government spends 400 billion dollars annually on anything pertaining to drugs or drug abuse. Out of that 400 billion, 120 billion dollars are alone spent on rehab treatments, labor participation costs, and premature death. 11 billion dollars are lost in healthcare costs, while another 61 billion dollars are lost in criminal justice costs. Barbra Ehrenreich, democratic socialist, believes that it is merely impossible for the United States to get out of its drug problem. She says " If there is anything more mind-altering, more destructive, to reason and common sense than drugs-it must be a drug frenzy. Drug frenzy is not, as many people like to think, just a quick and harmless high. It is an obsession, overshadowing all other concerns, and capable of leaving a society drained, impotent and brain damaged. There seems to be no stopping drug frenzy once it takes a hold of a nation." (23 and 24.) She voices her concern that drugs get way too much attention of other matter going on in our country by saying " It (drug abuse) overwhelms poverty, homelessness, and the federal debt. In foreign policy, drugs have replaced Communism as the Wilson 9scourge of the earth, and when we can't dispose a Third World strongman, we indict him for dealing." (24.) Others argue that America cannot afford to lose the war on drugs, while some say we lost it a long time ago. Reuben Greenberg, the first Africa American police

chief of Charleston, said " The drug menace threatens the whole fabric of society in a way that no other form of lawlessness does." (29.) Tom J. Ilaio, author of *America Under Siege*, once said " We cannot believe that nothing is happening around us, because something is definitely happening. We cannot just sit and watch TV and read news reports about victims dropping flies. We must not let drug gangs and thugs roam our streets and neighborhoods, turning them into battlefields, while we do nothing but lament. We can find the solution, not so much by an open declaration of war against outside forces, but by looking without ourselves. If we honestly plumb the depths of our being and examine ourselves seriously, then we can put an end to this problem." (31.) Jon Kyl, a former United States senator, also felt strongly that America could not lose the war against drugs by boldly stating, " This country that dreams of putting men on Mars; which has already been to the moon; which has pioneered unbelievable scientific and medical achievements, and which has shown greater compassion for people's humanity than any other history of the world, will not allow itself to be destroyed by drugs. We have solved more difficult problems. It's time to get serious about this one." (33.) Reuben Greenberg once again speaks a piece of his mind by saying, " It's a war. We may not be winning it at the moment, but we sure as hell can't afford to lose it. And some day, if we Americans put all our might and muscle, all our brains and determination into it, victory will be ours." (35.)

Wilson ¹⁰In contrast, some citizens think that America has already lost the war on drugs. Kevin B. Zeese, the president of common sense for the Drug Policy, thinks that our government is wasting its time by fighting back against drug abuse. He also criticizes the government for using

the entirely wrong manner in doing so as well. He says " When is the U. S. government going to realize that a war on drugs, complete with interdiction and eradication programs, won't work. What is clear after very many years of drug wars related orchestrated out of Washington is that interdiction programs and eradication efforts have not stopped the flow of drugs into the United States. Quite the contrary, drug related violence has reached America's heartland and coke traffickers threaten to destabilize the oldest democracy in South America." (pg. 40)There are countless drugs abused in the United States every year. Billions of dollars are spent each year trying to improve conditions, which make some people wonder if it is really worth fighting for. Knowing the nature of the American people, drugs are going to take over our country without a fight. How high can America get after all?

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