Legalization of Marijuana in the United States

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Marijuana is a drug, that has become a hot topic for debate; it is all over media from the past few years. Marijuana is term denoted to the dried leaves, stems, and flowers of the plant cannabis that contains some compounds having brain altering properties. The debate on marijuana spins around where it should be legalized or not, and if there is no legalization how its trade and consumption should be regulated. This has created a big divide between two groups of people, each having their own opinions. A large number of states in the US have legalized this drug owing to its remedial purpose. Though some states have still not legalized marijuana and it restricts the medicinal use of drugs coupled with other impacts. Regardless of many explanations on marijuana prohibition, Marijuana should be federally legal in the US since it offers numerous economic benefits, is not a gateway to other drugs, and will eradicate crimes and illegal activities.

Federal legalization of marijuana will free trade in all the states resulting in countless economic benefits for the US. the legalization of marijuana could create a new industrial middle-class in America. Marijuana could be the new automotive industry. all the dead factory mills rotting away in cities across America could become bustling centers of marijuana packaging and processing. $20/hr. jobs for those without $100,000s in student loan debt would be available, high-school students could opt out of student loan indentured servitude for a $40,000/yr. job at a weed factory. Billions in tax revenue would be earned across the Union (*National-Cannabis-Economy-Final.Pdf*). The billions wasted annually on law enforcement efforts and the incarceration of marijuana-based crime would evaporate, freeing up the budget to produce sufficient public restrooms across America for human beings to have the ability to attend to their needs without having to buy their way into a restaurant. The poor could be fed, the cold provided shelter. America is capitalist, the tax benefits alone should have made us the epicenter of cannabis decades ago. Thus, federal legalization can bring many benefits to the nation as a whole.

Marijuana should not remain illegal since it is not a "gateway" drug leading to others any more than alcohol, legalization should be a matter of time (Pacula et al.). For those predisposed to addiction, any drug which acts upon the mind and body can lead to further abuse. Huffing glue is an example; many other harmful drugs are legal in the states on the federal level. Of the 27 Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, only one restricted personal liberty. It was the Eighteenth Amendment, banning the manufacture, importation, or transportation of alcohol and instituting Prohibition. It was later repealed as a failure. However, with overblown media coverage of folks in Colorado being irresponsible and overdosing on marijuana edibles, there could be a backlash from those who feel it is their responsibility to protect people from themselves or hurting others by regulating every possible danger. Even sugar is dangerous to human health; marijuana is not a drug more harmful than alcohol that is regrettably legal. Thus, marijuana/cannabis should also have fair legal policies.

The medicinal properties of marijuana are also a strong argument in favor of its legalization. Marijuana is a healthy choice over prescription drugs for many people. It often provides superior relief and cures than pharmaceuticals and has the added benefit of being a natural cure with no side-effects, unlike prescription drugs (Hill). Medical patients, such as those suffering from Parkinson’s, experience night and day reactions to cannabinoids. There has also been a disturbing increase in fraudulent medical claims in medically legal states, which makes it more difficult to responsibly serve the patient community. However, if used for medicine it should be treated like other prescription drugs since it has healing properties in chronic pain (Hill). One needs a doctor to prescribe it and a pharmacy to fill it.

The legalization of marijuana will eradicate crimes and illegal activities pertaining to its trade and use. There is remarkable potential for the legalization of marijuana. In terms of taxation and regulatory concerns, legal US states have experienced returns to the tune of millions of dollars and have reduced the black market demand for cannabis, though some illegal activity still occurs. If we handle cannabis legalization effectively, it could be the gateway drug to usher in a new era of responsible drug policy and reform of mental health infrastructure to support substance users and abusers. In fact, studies have found a significant drop in the rate of violent crimes due to the legalization of marijuana (Shepard and Blackley). It frees up the courts to prosecute real crimes instead of those related to purchase and personal consumption.

Legalization of marijuana will also open the door for study of this substance and research on how it can be consumed more safely, medicinal benefits can be studied, and other users of the plant derivative can also be looked at (for example, Hemp can be used to make paper, is less expensive to harvest and is highly renewable meaning we can stop clear-cutting our forests). In addition, the statistics reveal that two-thirds of Americans are in the favor of legalization; either for medical or recreational use (NW et al.). The growth in public support and the potential for the study of this valuable plant also calls for marijuana legalization on the federal level.

Lots of people who are opponents of legalization stress the health risks of other legal drugs like alcohol in comparison with the relative safety of marijuana but then drive under the influence because they think it's harmless. However, companies selling other lawful but dangerous drugs do not want legalized marijuana as it can hinder their profitability from legal drugs. It is also said that legalization will increase the use of marijuana for recreational propose since people learn quickly how to responsibly consume. While I believe anybody should be able to use cannabis in the privacy of their homes, it’s important to recognize that everyone experiences it differently and that psychological addiction is also a real possibility. Addressing the psychological consequences of the abuse of THC will need to be a cornerstone of further policy in this regard. Like other drugs, the consumption of marijuana can also be regulated by law enforcement approaches (Hopfer).

If drugs, like marijuana (which is strangely classified as a Schedule I drug here in the USA still, as far as I know), became legalized, they could be controlled. Which, to some degree, California has already done so on some level. This means one can get cleaner products, that can be taxed, there is less violence on the streets because there are people who are not fighting for it with the law, people can create a business and can offer services, and it also creates jobs, which can offer compensation for a wide variety of people of all fields: drivers (delivery service), scientists, sales, engineering, more entrepreneurship opportunities, pharmaceutical agents to help prevent overdosing, and so forth. I don't think it should be illegal, but that we need a better infrastructure to regulate the access and deal with cannabis abuse before we can in good conscience legalize. Cannabis is a tricky substance because the evidence for both its medical applications and its rampant recreational abuse exist and be cherry-picked to argue any number of things.

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