

Marijuana

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Should marijuana be legalized? This question has been debated for a long time.

Marijuana has been deemed illegal by the federal government since 1970, but state laws governing marijuana have been subject to public debate in several states. California became the first marijuana-legalizing state in 1996. Twenty-seven states have decriminalized some marijuana possession crimes since that time, either in full or in part. According to Sara R (2022) in “Why Should Marijuana Be Legalized” marijuana has been proven to be an effective treatment for chronic pain, Anxiety, and depression. She also says it is a safer alternative to prescription drugs. In her article she discusses the benefits of legalizing marijuana and its side effects one of the main things she said was that marijuana is a gateway drug and how it can be very dangerous. For instance, I personally believe that marijuana should be illegal. We already know that smoking and vaping is bad, and marijuana is the same idea. Marijuana is stronger today than ever before causing people to become more easily addicted.

Sara R. states that marijuana is safer than alcohol or tobacco. She also says that it is not as addictive as other drugs since it does not produce the same euphoric effect (R., 2022). I disagree with this because Marijuana is a gateway drug. What this means is that people who use marijuana are more likely to develop alcohol use disorders and other substance disorders such as nicotine addictions. Lauren Shank (2022) puts this into a unique perspective in her article “Cons of Legalizing Recreational Drugs” she’s a development officer in children health, she has a lot of reputation when it comes medical field. She replaces marijuana with fruit. Imagine you have never tried fruit before, and you try it for the first time. Firstly, because it is a new addition to your diet, you want to eat it all the time. The more you eat, the less satisfying and less desirable it becomes, forcing you to look for a new snack aka a new substance (Shank,2022). This

perspective kills two birds with one stone. First off, it shows that marijuana is less addictive than other drugs because as you try to complete your craving you are going to be using an increasingly amount of it. Second it is not safer because it opens the door for alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse. According to the article Know the Risks of Marijuana (2022) Approximately one in ten people will become addicted if they use marijuana if a person starts before the age of sixteen the rate of addiction rises to one in six (Know the Risks of Marijuana 2022) Also according to Know the effects of Marijuana (2022) “the amount of THC or tetrahydrocannabinol in marijuana has been increasing. Today's marijuana has three times the amount of THC as in marijuana twenty-five years ago”. (Know the Risks of Marijuana, 2022) this proves that once you start using marijuana, you’re going to want to use it more often eventually you’ll end up suing something worse. We can also learn that the higher amount of THC the stronger it affects the brain.

Sara R. (2022) also states in her article that marijuana is “a safer alternative to prescription drugs”. I fail to agree with this because on top of marijuana being addictive there is not enough research done on the long-term effects. In the article “Is Marijuana Safe and Effective as Medicine” (NIH, 2021) “they say that there is little known about the long-term effects of its use by people with health and/or age-related vulnerabilities”. According to the website (Know the Risks of Marijuana, 2022) “marijuana can cause permanent IQ loss that does not even come back after quitting marijuana. Some studies say that Marijuana helps with depression, anxiety, and other mental disorders but it does not help and if anything, you can experience these symptoms when using marijuana and going through Marijuana withdrawal”. Marijuana's effects on timing, movement, and coordination have been demonstrated by research. Use of marijuana during pregnancy can result in fetal growth restriction, early birth, stillbirth,

and issues with brain development that include hyperactivity and impaired cognitive performance. This means that we do not know if marijuana is a safer alternative to prescription drugs and it could be doing worse than good. We should not rule out all the risks before the research is done.

In addition, Sara R. (2022) believes that marijuana should be legalized on behalf of the people that it would create more jobs. I disagree with the use of marijuana because it can change your life to be upside down and it can also be detrimental to health. However, I do agree with this statement. In the article “Nearly Half a Million Americans Work in The Marijuana Industry, New Leafy Report Finds” the author Kyle Jeager (2022) says that in 2021 half a million people now employed work in the cannabis sector. This number is only increasing. Also reported by Jeager (2022) in his article as of 2021, there are 428,059 people (about half the population of Montana) “employed in marijuana space compared to 321,00 the prior year. Jeager (2022) also says that there are more marijuana jobs than there are people working as hair stylists, barbers, and cosmetologists combined”. He says last year “America’s legal cannabis industry created more than 280 new jobs everyday” (Jeager, 2022). In conclusion legalizing marijuana would create more jobs but it would also create more problems in health and addiction areas. Are jobs more important than health? In my opinion no, if you struggle with your health or addiction, you cannot successfully do your job.

In contrast, Sara R. (2022) also says that legalizing marijuana would also generate revenue through taxation. Once again, I do agree with this fact. Kyle Jeager (2022) also provides this statement with support by stating that “states that have legalized marijuana for adults to collectively generated more than \$3.7 billion” (about \$11 per person in the US) “in tax revenue from recreational cannabis sales in 2021”. “That’s a thirty four percent increase compared to

revenue that states received from cannabis sales in 2020.” (Jaeger, 2022). According to Kyle Jaeger (2022) “in a more recent allocation, Michigan officials announced last month that they will be distributing nearly \$150 million in marijuana tax revenue”. All this evidence does support Sara R.’s statement but it does come back to your health being less important than money. Are we really willing to risk our health which could potentially mean lives over money. Money cannot do anything if you are not alive or have bad health because most of your money will go to health bills. As I talked about earlier smoking weed would affect your lungs. Not having lung health would affect your life in so many ways. It would affect your ability to work and exercise. Not being able to exercise would also affect your health by affecting your weight.

Overall marijuana should not be legalized all the “pros” are outweighed by the cons and/or can just be proven completely wrong. On top of there not being enough research on marijuana being used medically, 70% of today's marijuana users are not prescribed the drug. (Hendricks, 2020). Marijuana is like any other drug, and it should not be messed around with. It has irreversible effects. People who have consumed a lot of marijuana may go through an acute psychosis that involves hallucinations, delusions, and a loss of sense of self. Addiction is something that you risk when you smoke or use marijuana and is something that you do not want to have to deal with. If you don’t make the time to work on creating the life you want, you’re eventually going to be forced to spend a lot of time dealing with a life you don’t want.

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