

The 'High' Controversy of Legalizing Marijuana

by Madison Troy

I want you to forget everything you've ever heard about marijuana. The legalization of recreational marijuana has been an issue in our country for quite some time now, but too many people are basing their stances off of unreliable and inaccurate information. Marijuana isn't the dangerous, harmful drug everyone makes it out to be. This false information has kept the legalization of marijuana off the table, but the recent legalizations in Colorado and Washington have put the issue under great scrutiny. The recreational use of marijuana should be nationally legalized because of the benefits to its users and lack of harmful effects.

Marijuana has a bad reputation as a dangerous and destructive drug. Many are unaware of this, but marijuana actually benefits its users, and the community around them. According to The Schaffer Library of Drug Policy, marijuana relaxes the user, making them 26% less likely to commit a violent crime than a non-smoker. Legalizing marijuana could actually lower violent crime rates. Also, marijuana can numb pain. It's a plant based, safe way to suppress aching and discomfortability. DEA Administrative Law Judge Francis L. Young was quoted saying, "Marijuana, in its natural form, is one of the safest therapeutically active substances known to man." In the medical sense, smoking marijuana protects the white matter in your brain that alcohol destroys. In a recent study led by Dr. Donald Tashkin, it is shown that marijuana has neuroprotective properties that can alleviate and lessen the brain damage caused by drinking alcohol.

Refraining people from the use of marijuana is infringing on our rights as a people. Recent studies have shown that marijuana is, in fact, not a narcotic, which is a drug sold for non medical use that drastically affects mood or behavior in a negative way. Since marijuana is not a narcotic, the government does not have the legal right to ban its use. Marijuana causes little to no negative effects, limited to minor dizziness or confusion. Substances that are already legal, such as alcohol or tobacco, can actually cause more damage to the user than marijuana. Alcohol can bring about violent, dangerous emotions, while marijuana relaxes the user. Over 5,000,000 violent crimes per year in the USA are caused by alcohol. Marijuana has no hand in any violent crimes on record. The use of alcohol negatively impacts their society as well as the drinker, but marijuana has no effect on others, except for a slight scent in the air.

Some people say legalizing marijuana will cause deadly brain diseases, or would impact the mental growth of America's youth. The government has stated that in the case of legalization, there would be strict laws in place to regulate the purchase marijuana, and an I.D. check would be required. Also, new studies have shown that marijuana has absolutely no connection to the growth of cancer cells. In fact, quite the opposite has been discovered. Long term marijuana use could actually prevent cancerous cells from growing in the neck and brain.

Marijuana should be recreationally legal because it benefits to the user, and is part of our rights as humans, and as Americans. Consider the facts, and take action. Consider the evidence, and make a decision true to American values. But, the next time voting comes around, remember the benefits of marijuana, and remember the rights of the people.