Legalize Hemp Essay, Research Paper

Legalize Hemp!

Legally defined, marijuana consists of the dried leaves and flowers of the plant Cannabis sativa. Cannabis is one of the most ancient and historically important of cultivated plants. Hemp or Cannabis has been cultivated for at least 6000 years (Frank 3). On account of the many advantages that this multipurpose plant offers, I see reason to believe that it should be legalized, to the public, in all forms.

The legalization of hemp would reduce the size of our overpopulated jails. As a result, millions of tax dollars, wasted on putting petty hemp criminals in jails each year, could be used for so many other things, like education. Recent studies show that it costs 25,000 dollars just to build a jail cell, and 30,000 annually for each prisoner. Currently, a very strict law which does not tolerate any sort of marijuana possession or consumption is in effect. It has ridiculously thrown thousands and thousands of people in our already crowded jails only because they simply had possession of a plant which grows naturally and has been growing naturally longer than the history of this country.

If legalized, cannabis can aid the entire practice of medicine in its ability to treat various ailments. The dried leaves, flowers and root of the marijuana plant are used in the preparation of numerous medicines. Hemp is known to have been prepared for the treatment of malaria, constipation, absentmindedness, menstrual pains, cancer and even AIDS (Frank 3). Marijuana can be used as a replacement to the existing hazardous prescribed medicine containing all sorts of chemicals with side effects. The Marijuana Tax Act of 1937 effectively outlawed marijuana, and ended doctors? ability to prescribe marijuana for medicinal purposes in the U.S.A (Frank 3). But before made illegal, marijuana was prescribed for various ailments by healers around the world. And if made legal, it is obvious that marijuana is capable to do wonders for the entire field of medicine.

Another benefit from legalizing hemp, comes from the versatility and usefulness of the hemp fiber. From the Cannabis stem comes hemp, a very long, strong fiber that can be used to make rope, nets, cloth, and paper of acclaimed durability (Frank 3). Hemp paper is prized for its longevity and resistance to tearing. Some Bibles, books and manuscripts, and some paper money are still made from hemp fiber (Frank 3). Hemp-made products have been known to last longer because the fiber is so strong, thus, making sense to switch from tree made products to hemp made products for two reasons. First, hemp fiber is known to have strength and endurance greater than cotton and tree products. Most importantly, switching to hemp for production of products

instead of trees would greatly benefit our endangered rain forests. As a result of destroying trees to simply make paper some rain-forests have now turned into deserts. Therefore, the destruction of rain-forests can be avoided, and higher quality products could be made if hemp were to be legalized.

Most importantly, the government should legalize cannabis because the existing law is hypocritical, in that tobacco and alcohol, which are legal, have been proven to be more harmful. There are very convincing reasons that smoking cigarettes is relatively more dangerous to the body. It is accepted by scientists today that all American cigarettes absorb significant amounts of radiation similar to that of the atomic bomb. The plant roots of tobacco and leaves are very good at absorbing radioactive elements. Although smoking marijuana has the potential to cause cancer, if legalized this potential would be decreased and maybe eliminated. Legalizing Marijuana would make better water bongs and marijuana foods, drinks and pills both less expensive and more accessible. Smoking through a water filled bong would help cool the smoke and filter some of the carcinogens. Eating or drinking marijuana effectively eliminates all negative effects. In my opinion, the only risk involved in smoking marijuana right now might just be the law.

The law should no longer prohibit the use of the cannabis plant on account of the many advantages that it possesses in all forms. Seeing that it can save us millions in taxes and reduce our prisons, we should ask ourselves, why not legalize it? Additionally, legalizing hemp would aid the

medical field and preserve the destruction of endangered natural habitats such as the rain-forests. Most disturbing for advocates of hemp legalization is in the contradiction of law that exists by allowing tobacco and alcohol to be legal. Hemp is a plant which is most useful for society, and by not allowing ourselves free access to it we lose the opportunity to take advantage of nature?s wonderful plant.

\*Frank, Mel. Marijuana Grower?s Insider?s Guide. Los Angeles: Red, 1988.