Legalize Industrial Hemp Essay, Research Paper

Legalize Industrial Hemp

It?s time to do something about it! Our government has kept it away from us

for long enough. The hemp plant is a misunderstood natural resource that if

legalized would solve many problems in the United States. Our founding fathers

grew and used this plant faithfully. It is a remarkably strong and versatile plant. In

fact, it is helpful to our diminishing environment. We need to decide the outcome of

our future, and legalize growing industrial hemp for the good of humanity.

?The oldest relic of human history is hemp fabric dated to 8,000 BC from

Ancient Mesopotamia, an area in present-day Turkey.? Both George Washington

and Thomas Jefferson grew hemp. America was founded on hemp. The first

American flag and the Declaration of Independence were made from hemp fiber. At

about the turn of the 20th century companies like DuPont, who developed chemicals

to allow trees to be processed into paper, began to eliminate the need for hemp.

Before that hemp was used for thousands of years to make paper and textiles.

DuPont was able to make wood pulp paper cheaper than hemp paper due to these

chemicals. In 1942 the American government introduce a film called ?Hemp for

Victory? which showed the most efficient way to grow and cultivate hemp for war

efforts. By the end of the war hemp was not needed and the soldiers that used hemp

in battle were forced to destroy the hemp that once helped them survive. Human

history shows that hemp is a valuable resource with it?s many uses. People

throughout history have grown this plant for everything from food to fuel.

Hemp seeds are high in protein, calcium, magnesium, phosphorous,

potassium, and vitamin A. Hemp seeds are the most nutritional and potentially

abundant food source on Earth. Hemp seeds can be eaten in many different ways,

eaten whole, pressed into oil like soybeans, and ground into flour for baking. The

nutritional value alone would make this a great resource, but hemp has many other

uses. The hemp plant produces a stalk which contains fibers that are among the

world?s longest and strongest. It was used widely in the United States for sails,

rope, clothing, and much more for hundreds of years before once again DuPont

patented nylon. The cotton industry is also a competitor of hemp. Not only does

cotton produce a shorter, weaker fiber, but it also consume half of the world?s

annual supply of pesticides, and depletes the soil. Hemp products are stronger than

cotton and they last longer.

?The oldest paper in existence is a 100 percent hemp Chinese text dated to

770 AD.? Hemp paper is stronger, lasts longer, and can be recycled more often

wood pulp paper. Hemp has a cellulose level three times larger than wood, and

yields four times more pulp per acre than trees. Hemp is also friendlier to the

environment than the process used to produce wood pulp. A hemp crop is ready to

be harvested 120 days after planting, while trees take hundreds or thousands of

years to mature. Hemp paper manufacturing will reduce the level of the chemical

by-products that are produced by wood paper manufacturing. This reduction of

chemicals will do wonders for the environment.

Hemp can be the perfect answer to most of our ecological problems. Hemp

will reduce deforestation by producing more fiber more often than trees.

Environmentalists and farmers have a full spectrum of reasons to value and

appreciate the hemp plant. It absorbs four times more carbon dioxide than trees per

acre, and doesn?t require heavy fertilizers or pesticides. It grows tightly spaced, out

competing any weeds, so herbicides are also not necessary. Hemp stabilizes,

enriches, and replenishes the soil with its root structure and fallen leaves after

harvest. They can not only grow in depleted soil, but hemp will leave it more

enriched than when it was planted. Eco-friendly hemp can replace most toxic

petro-chemical products.

Ethanol is the cleanest burning liquid to gasoline. The high level of cellulose

in hemp make it great in the production of ethanol fuel. The use of gasoline in the

United Sates is very high. The use of it however is dangerous to the environment

and costly. Gasoline prices are very high and will keep rising as the world?s oil is

used up. The much more abundant hemp seed however could produce a fuel that is

cheaper and much safer for the environment. As the highways and byways get

busier and busier the atmosphere gets more and more polluted. If our society must

always have their own car than we must not deprive ourselves and our environment

and grow hemp.

The government has made everyone believe that hemp is the same as

marijuana, when in fact hemp has no delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC. THC is

the psychoactive chemical present in marijuana. Industrial hemp contains no THC

and is therefore not a drug. All of the products produced from hemp are also

THC-free and are also not drug related. Before anything can be done about the

hemp prohibition Americans must realize that the hemp plant is not a drug, but a

very versatile natural resource.

Some people claim that it would be difficult to tell the difference between the

hemp plant and the marijuana plant. That is not a problem because hemp looks more

like bamboo than marijuana. The 30 nations that legally cultivate hemp have no

trouble telling the difference between the types of cannabis. The government would

have no trouble if they look at the crop before deciding if it is hemp or marijuana.

The government was obviously able to tell the difference between the two plants

when they needed the fiber for the war. The hemp plant could possibly change the

way this country works. The hemp industry would provide thousands of jobs for

unemployed Americans. The farming industry would thrive due to their ability to

replenish their soil while still profiting off of depleted soil. Legalizing this plant

would do much more good than harm to our society.

The American government is moving in the right direction. They have put it

off for long enough and now is the time to make a change. Hawaii has made hemp

history in America. In December of 1999 the state of Hawaii planted the first

industrial hemp seeds since world war II. This is a big step in the direction of a

cleaner environment and wealthier society. Although this small test crop in Hawaii

will not produce economic profit, it will provide information on the benefits of the

plant economically and environmentally.

Industrial hemp is more versatile than the soybean, the cotton plant, and the

reliable douglas fir combined. Dollars speak louder than words however. Millions of

dollars of hemp is imported into the United States every year. The government and

American farmers are missing out on the great profit that comes with the hemp

product. If the government continues to treat the actual plant as a Schedule I

Controlled Substance, it will continue to make it impossible to grow hemp. If they

make it impossible for the farmers to grow it we will never know if the hemp plant

will really help out our farmers, environment, and economic profit along with

unemployment. Hemp could be the next billion dollar crop, but the nation will never

know if the government keeps it away from us.

If our founding fathers were able to see the hemp plant as a great resource we

should also be able to do so. Let us put everything we thought the hemp plant was

behind us and take it for what it is. A versatile cash crop that is environmentally safe

and has the possibility to be very abundant. THC-free hemp will let many farmers

get back on their feet and will make the United States a more prosperous country.

It?s time to catch up with the rest of the industrial world that is producing this

wonderful yet misunderstood crop.

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