Legalize Marijuana Essay, Research Paper

Legalize marijuana

For the past 30 years there has been an issue throughout the United States on whether marijuana should be legalized. Supporters believe marijuana legalization would decrease drug-related crime while also posing a new drug for medicinal purposes. The opposition believes legalization would only increase crime as well as the number of hard-core drug addicts that result from initially using marijuana. Keeping marijuana illegal is a problem because millions of people are arrested every year for selling or possessing marijuana and it is causing prisons to be overcrowded and drug related crime is increasing (”Prohibition In Their Prime”). Illegal marijuana is affecting people throughout the country as well as users of marijuana for recreational and medicinal purposes, because tax money is being used to enforce this issue. Tax money is specifically being spent for law enforcement, court systems, and prison expansions (Thronton 1). This problem needs to be solved immediately to allow prison overcrowding to cease and to halt the drug-related crime that is produced in effect to marijuana being illegal.

My solution to the problem is to legalize marijuana and create government owned and operated stores selling marijuana. I propose that legalization would reduce the amount of inmates in prisons, decrease the amount of drug-related crime associated with marijuana, and save tax money. Considering a majority of prisoners are in jail in some way because of marijuana, if it was legalized these people would be released from prison instead of violent criminals who are often given early release due to overcrowded prisons (”Pro and Con”). The United States citizens have some power in legalization and then again they don’t. In Colorado recently, voters voted yes on a proposal to allow marijuana for medicinal use, yet the Colorado state legislature has not enacted the proposal (”Marijuana Measure An Apparent Winner”). The people who possess the needed power to legalize are our United States government officials. It will take Congress proposing a bill and it being passed through the legislature. There will definitely be a considerable amount of time involved for the process as well as money to be spent on the marijuana stores throughout the United States. The feasibility of my solution that legalizing will reduce drug-related crime, prison overpopulation, and stopping tax dollars from being wasted on the battle, definitely holds ground. The solution stands a chance of being enacted because it could become a great source of income for our country. Every year, drug dealers make billions of dollars selling marijuana (Inciardi 10). Our government, by setting up stores that sell marijuana, could be making money (”Prohibition In Their Prime”). Also, they would be ensuring that the marijuana is of good quality and not laced with chemicals like some marijuana being sold throughout the country (”Legalizing Drugs Makes Matters Worse”). Another strong point in my proposed solution is that the prisons would not be overcrowded and additions wouldn’t need to be made to prisons. By legalizing marijuana, many people in jail on marijuana charges would be released. Also those people who would be committing crime that is associated with marijuana would not be committing crime anymore. And right now, in a few states, marijuana is legalized for medicinal purposes. It is not allowed in all states, but legalization would allow ill patients all over the country to be able to use marijuana to alleviate pain. Many patients with illnesses such as multiple sclerosis and cancer would benefit by legalizing because marijuana is an effective method in treating pain and nausea (”Life As Usual In Emerald Triangle”). The solution to legalize holds minimal costs. Right now, the country spends nearly 700 million dollars on drug enforcement. Much of this tax money spent is to fight marijuana being used and sold (Ostrowski 12). This money already spent on taxes could be reduced and the reduced amount could be spent on setting up stores all over the country to sell marijuana. Another proposal could be that marijuana be legalized and sold in drugs stores across the country. This would allow the government to not have to build stores, but they could still tax the marijuana and sell it with regulation. The proposed solution has the potential to solve the overcrowding prisons and reduce the drug-related crime associated with marijuana. It would solve the problem by releasing criminals who are already in prison due to marijuana charges and people who would be convicted in the future would not be sent to prison because of legalization would reduce crime associated with marijuana. The unforeseen positive effects of legalization would be a new market for jobs, but the negative effect could be more people using marijuana while operating automobiles and in turn, causing many accidents. There would have to be a regulation imposed with marijuana, much like alcohol laws. People under the influence of marijuana will have to be denied the right to drive while impaired. There is no denying that marijuana alters your mind, so regulations would have to be a must.

My proposed solution has been implemented similarly in other foreign countries. Marijuana has been legalized, for instance, in the Netherlands. In recent findings, the crime rate has gone down by more than 4 percent, but the country also legalized all drugs. This shows that legalization would reduce drug related crime. The prison systems, in direct result to legalization, have had a decline in new prisoners as well. Also, surprisingly, drug usage has slightly decreased in the Netherlands (”McCaffrey’s Inaccurate Statistics”). This country also has cut spending in fighting illegal drugs, something that the United States would benefit greatly from. This money would be spent in other areas that need reform, like education. Many people, though, despite the studies done in foreign countries, are still opposed to legalization. The opposition claims that the studies are not accurate and that legalization would cause America’s youth to begin using at a younger age. In response to this opposition, I use cigarettes and alcohol as examples of regulated substances. The government has imposed laws stating you must be 18 to purchase cigarettes and 21 to purchase liquor. My proposal would put restrictions on marijuana to be sold more than likely to adults of 18 years old. This doesn’t stop teenagers from getting their hands on marijuana, but as with anything that has restrictions, people find a way to get what they want. It is up to parents to teach their kids about marijuana and to keep them away from it. Another assumed problem is marijuana usage would increase dramatically. History repeats itself, by this I mean, during Prohibition liquor use was high, once legalized consumption went down. Also, in the Netherlands, marijuana usage was found to have decreased once legalized. Prohibition has also proven that with decriminalization, crime rates went down. This has a strong association with the legalization of marijuana. There is a strong chance that consumption and crime will be reduced significantly if marijuana is legalized (Thronton 1). By legalizing drugs the crime rate associated with drugs would decrease and there would be less overcrowded prisons. The United States would have billions of dollars to spend on other problems that the country faces and marijuana will help the people in America who are suffering from painful illnesses. Marijuana legalization should be established in the future to work towards bettering our country.

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