Should Marijuana Be Legalized? Essay, Research Paper

Should Marijuana be Legalized?

Aaron Roberts

Mr. Marshall

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Marijuana should be legalized. Marijuana s composition is complex, and has a number of physiological effects. Also, a reason for marijuana legalization is the potential wealth of health benefits that have largely been ignored (www.howardcc.edu). In addition, there are many industrial uses for the cannabis plant (www.sandi.net).

Marijuana consists of a mixture of leaves, stems, and flowering tops of the Cannabis sativa plant, or hemp plant (Britannica 7/47). Marijuana is also known as grass, pot, tea, or weed. Both male and female plants contain psychoactive substances called cannabinoids. The ingredient in marijuana that produces most of the psychological and physiological effects is 1-delta-9-tetrahydrocannibinol, or THC. THC effects primarily the nervous system and on the heart and blood vessels. Marijuana generally produces changes in mood, mental abilities, coordination, blood pressure, and pulse. These physiological factors result in a high, including euphoria, relaxation and sleepiness (Marshall 76).

Marijuana potentially has many health benefits that have been widely ignored. Marijuana holds the promise of being a treatment for glaucoma, chemotherapy-induced nausea, multiple sclerosis, and AIDS, among many others (www.howardcc.edu). In addition, the side effects of marijuana use, which include hunger and red eyes, are beneficial. The munchies (hunger) allow cancer and AIDS patients eat without becoming nauseous. The red eyes are a sign of vascular dilation which means marijuana could relieve migraine headaches (www.sandi.net). The problem is marijuana is classified as a Schedule 1 drug, which means that the drug has no currently accepted medical use as a treatment in the United States. This restricts any research or experimentation to be made with marijuana. Many researchers have suggested that marijuana be promoted to Schedule 2 classification, which would allow it to be tested, allow it would still be

illegal. In addition, the medical community is the place where marijuana legalization has received the most support (Marshall 79).

The many uses of the Cannabis plant have remained hidden since 1937, when the Marijuana Tax Act was passed, prohibiting the cultivation of the cannabis plant. Paper and clothing can both be made out of hemp with less harm to the environment. One acre of hemp can produce the same amount of paper as wood, with much less chemicals (www.sandi.net). Hemp fiber and pulp can also make biodegradable alternatives to plastic. In addition, many plastic products can be made with hemp cellulose without the use of petroleum. The cannabis plant can be used to make plant biomass fuel which can provide gasoline, methane, charcoal, and is much cleaner than fossil fuels. Lastly, hemp can be fabricated into boards for construction (www.sandi.net).

Marijuana has a distinct composition, and its properties incite much debate about the issue of legalization. Marijuana has many health benefits. Also the cannabis plant has many industrial uses. Marijuana should be legalized.

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