The Advantages Of Being Legal Essay, Research Paper

The Advantages of Being Legal

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There are many arguments on the question of whether or not to legalize

marijuana. The benefits of legalizing marijuana include its medicinal value and

its many uses to produce commercial products like paper, rope, oil, textiles,

and canvas. Another good reason to legalize marijuana is that hundreds of

thousands of non-violent drug offenders are overpopulating prisons, costing

taxpayers millions of dollars. Legalization would also put marijuana dealers

out of business and it would bring revenue to the government like alcohol and

tobacco does. Some opposition to legalizing marijuana is that traffic

fatalities would increase, and that more people like school teachers and bus

drivers would be smoking legally purchased marijuana. They also believe that

more young people would smoke more marijuana.

Marijuana is medicine and has been used as medicine for thousands of

years to treat a wide variety of ailments. It is one of the safest

therapeutically active substances known. Marijuana is often useful in the

treatment of cancer, AIDS, glaucoma, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy and chronic

pain. For cancer patients, marijuana alleviates the nausea, vomiting, and loss

of appetite caused by chemotherapy treatment. It does the same for people with

AIDS. By reducing intraocular pressure, marijuana helps slow or halt the

gradual increasing eye pressure suffered by glaucoma patients. Marijuana reduces

the muscle pain and spastically caused by multiple sclerosis. It also helps some

patients control their bladders. With some epileptic patients, marijuana

prevents seizures. Marijuana is also a very effective pain reliever.

Hemp, a plant mainly grown for its use as a fiber source, is from the

same plant that produces marijuana. It is different because industrial hemp is

grown with minute amounts of delta-9 and tetrahydrocannibinol, abbreviated as

THC, which is the element in marijuana that gives the ?high sensation’.

Industrial hemp is one of nature’s strongest and most versatile agricultural

crops. It can be used to produce various things such as textiles, paper,

clothing, plastics, cosmetics, food stuffs, insulation, and animal feed. Hemp

seeds can be used to make high protein foods and the oil can be used to produce

non-toxic paint, varnish, detergent, diesel fuel, ink, and lubricating oil.

One acre of hemp produces as much fiber as two to three acres of cotton

and one acre also produces as much paper as two to four acres of trees. The

advantage of using paper products produced by hemp is that hemp’s growing cycle

is around one hundred days, while it takes trees years to grow to produce the

same amount of paper. Hemp was cultivated in the U. S. until 1937, when the

Marijuana Tax Act outlawed marijuana. In 1942 the government encouraged American

farmers to cultivate hemp for the war effort, but then in 1955 prohibitionists

had reasserted a total ban on production. Now the DEA, Drug Enforcement

Administration, remains firmly opposed to any notion of revising the federal

laws to allow hemp’s domestic cultivation.

Every year 400,000 Americans are arrested for marijuana and thousands of

them are sent to prison. Marijuana users and dealers account for sixty percent

of all prisoners today. Because of new anti-drug laws, these prisoners can be

jailed for up to thirty years, and most are, even for minor crimes. Federal and

State governments are spending billions to build more prisons to house hundreds

of thousands of non-violent drug offenders.

Legalization would kill the black market for marijuana. Marijuana sales

would be regulated by state and federal governments. It would also help the

economy by a reduction in law enforcement costs, and police could focus more on

dangerous drugs such as cocaine, heroin, and crystal meth.

Some people who oppose the legalization of marijuana say that traffic

fatalities would increase. The myth is that 40% of drug related emergency room

visits are marijuana related. The fact is that this statistic purposely excludes

the legal drug of alcohol, a drug notorious for causing violence and accidents.

A marijuana related emergency room visit does not mean marijuana caused the

incident. If the patient admits to using marijuana days or weeks before the

incident or if someone involved in the incident is found only possessing

marijuana, then the emergency room admission is counted as marijuana related.

At first, the amount of people using marijuana may increase. The idea

that people like school teachers, day care providers, and bus drivers smoking

legally purchased marijuana and endangering others is something that should not

be worried about. Do these people drink alcohol before going to work or smoke

cigarettes during work? They are mostly responsible adults and if they choose to

smoke the legally purchased marijuana, they would do it responsibly.

Most recreational marijuana smokers will continue to smoke even if

marijuana is never legalized. I was forced to temporarily quit smoking because

of the system. I used to occasionally smoke until my room was searched at the

college I attended freshman year. I felt that my personal rights were violated

when every room on my hall was searched after someone set off a firework. The

search was conducted by a R.A., a person who is my age, and it was done without

my roommate or I present . Nothing was left in plain sight, in fact, all of the

paraphernalia was found in a backpack which was in a filing cabinet that was in

my closet. I felt as though I did not commit a crime, but as though I was the

victim. As former president Lincoln said, ? Prohibition goes beyond the bounds

of reason in that it attempts to control a man’s appetite by legislation, and a

makes a crime out of things that are not crimes. A prohibition law strikes a

blow at the very principles upon which our government was founded.?

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