

---

## The Pros and Cons of Marijuana Legalization

Cutting across party lines, gender, education, and race; public support for marijuana legalization has increased significantly over the last decade. The United States has seen several states legalize this drug, like Colorado, and after the legalization of marijuana in Colorado, other state legislatures and government officials have made inquiries to Colorado officials about the possible benefits from legalization, one of which official, Colorado Democrat John Hickenlooper has told those officials “Just say no”. Currently, in New Jersey, marijuana is available through medicinal means. However, New Jersey State Senator Nicholas Scutari is proposing legislation to legalize marijuana. Senator Scutari believes, the state can “ regulate the growth, procession and sale of recreational marijuana would dry up the illegal drug market, clean up street corners and stuff the state’s coffers with a new source of tax revenue.” Although Senator Scutari believes these assumptions about the legalization of marijuana, after a close examination of the societal costs of marijuana, we can see the repercussions of legalizing marijuana is much more complex.

Upon closer examination, we can discover there are societal costs of marijuana legalization. First off, marijuana causes ill lasting effects on the human body. Marijuana can cause anxiety, distorted judgment, inferior educational scores, respirational problems, and slower reaction times. Additionally, the younger an individual is to start using marijuana, the more likely that individual will experience the averse side effects of marijuana usage. Marijuana, as we know it today, is more potent than ever before. According to Dr. Mahmoud ElSohly, director the Marijuana Potency Project, the active ingredient in marijuana, tetrahydrocannabinol or THC found in marijuana “has soared from less than 1% to 3 to 4% in the 1990s, to nearly 13% today.” This has led to “higher addictive potential” and according to Dr. Christian Thurstone, who runs an addiction treatment center in Denver, asserts, ““It’s more difficult to get kids clean...because they come in less motivated for treatment, and more addicted.” Furthermore, legalization and the decriminalization of weed have shown to increase usage of marijuana in minors. The national average for individuals ages twelve through seventeen using marijuana is around eight percent while in Colorado this number hovers around eleven percent.

Although this number may not seem alarming, reports have shown the number of marijuana users increases during high school years. For example, in 2011, “one out of four of the Boulder Country District high school students surveyed indicated that they were current marijuana users,” which turns out to be three times the national average among high school students.<sup>6</sup> This increase in young marijuana users in Colorado has led to an increase in emergency room visits relating to marijuana for individuals age twelve to seventeen from twenty-five percent from 2005-2008 to twenty-eight percent from 2009-2011.<sup>6</sup> Nationally within the same years the

---

### Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

**GET HELP**

---

percentage for marijuana related emergency room visits is eighteen percent from 2009-2011. This conveys a stark difference in the amount of emergency room visits relating to marijuana for minors between lenient marijuana regulations in Colorado and stricter marijuana regulations in other states.<sup>6</sup> With an increase in marijuana potency and marijuana users, this has precipitated an increase in the dangers associated with marijuana use. For example, from 2006 to 2011, traffic fatalities in Colorado decreased by sixteen percent, however, traffic fatalities where drivers tested positive for marijuana increased an astounding one hundred and fourteen percent.

Enthusiasts of marijuana legalization claim marijuana will bring revenue to our state and federal government. However, if we take a look at the impact of other vices like alcohol and cigarettes, this assertion is not so clear. The “Alcohol-related costs total over \$185 billion while federal and states collected an estimated \$14.5 billion in tax revenue; similarly, tobacco use costs over \$200 billion but only \$25 billion is collected in taxes.” Thus, this shows the legalization of a vice does not definitively generate profit. Furthermore, even if you do legalize marijuana, this does not mean people will stop buying the drug illegally. For example, the legalization of gambling has not decreased illegal gambling.

In fact; the legalization of gambling increased illegal gambling.<sup>8</sup> This is due in part to the taxes and regulations that are associated with legal gambling.<sup>8</sup> If marijuana were to be legalized, just like gambling, the drug would face heavy regulation and taxes. Furthermore proponents of marijuana claim this drug has medicinal value. However, this assertion is rather misleading. To clarify “Synthetic THC is the main ingredient in Marinol, and FDA approved medication to control in cancer chemotherapy patients and to stimulate appetite in people with AIDS.”<sup>9</sup> The active ingredient in marijuana is already being sold through legal means in FDA-approved drug for medicinal value. Additionally, the Institute of Medicine has concluded smoking marijuana is not beneficial for “long term medical use.”

Although I do not favor marijuana legalization, I understand political and social realities. Forty-one percent of the people of New Jersey support marijuana legalization with this number expected to increase.<sup>8</sup> With a changing tide in public opinion, will eventually come a change in governmental policy. This is shown by the 6.2 million dollars raised by lobbyists in Washington State for the legalization of marijuana compared to 16,000 dollars raised by opponents of legalization. I do not agree with how marijuana laws are currently enforced, but last night in my dreams the Lord spoke to me. He told me to spread the word of the 11th Commandment, “Thou shall not smoke marijuana.” Thus I say to you Brothers of Delta Sigma Pi, come to me and repent for your sins. Marijuana prohibition currently costs state and federal governments over twenty billion dollars a year. Part of this cost is incurred from the costs of prosecuting marijuana infractions. In 2011, 750,000 people were arrested for marijuana related crimes in 2011.<sup>11</sup> It is estimated that marijuana legalization would save \$8.7 billion dollars in regards to law

---

## Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

**GET HELP**

---

enforcement.<sup>11</sup> I believe America should prepare for the eventual legalization of marijuana and make preparations for such case. So I do declare that if America wants to smoke then smoke and roll! I do declare that if the people so chose to legalize this drug, then let the fruits of democracy bless us with thy nectar. I do declare that if those in college would like to relive their stresses of the daily rigor of life, then let them to so for their pursuit of happiness.

gradesfixer.com

---

### **Need help with the assignment?**

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

**GET HELP**