

- Legalization v.s. Criminalization cont

If all of the 60,000 are cannabis users, it represents 0.25% of that population. If we all donated just \$25 (less than you'd smoke up over a weekend), these groups would have \$600,000,000 to use to change public opinion.

"Demand is higher for marijuana than for any other illicit drug, and the constancy of this demand over time has ensured marijuana's ready availability and profitability. No less than 75 percent of illicit drug users in the United States aged 12 or older--an estimated 14.6 million persons--reported current use of marijuana in 2003."

-Religious use

Cannabis has been used as a ritualistic offering to Shiva by Hindus in India since 1200 B.C.E., and has appeared in their sacred text Atharva veda (Science of Charms) as "Sacred Grass." The Jewish Talmud also mentions the euphoric properties of Cannabis. Rastafarians smoke cannabis during religious ceremonies, and it's been at the heart of their religion since its inception in the 1930s, as a doorway to hear the word of 'Jah.' More recently, churches such as The Hawaiian Church Ministry have been openly using marijuana as their sacrament.

- Culture

Cannabis has been a part of human culture for over 5,000 years. It is speculated that Jesus of Nazareth may have used it, and the first recorded use of cannabis as medicine in Chinese pharmacopoeia appeared in 2727 B.C. More recently, cannabis has been used by musicians, actors, artists, medical professionals, lawyers, architects, scientists, professional athletes, Republicans, Democrats, conservatives, liberals, and a myriad of other people as a recreational outlet. The subculture surrounding marijuana is shared by people of all...



- Culture (continued)

racial and religious backgrounds. Many products exist to appeal to people who use marijuana; cigars and blunt wraps, papers, and the ever popular bong. Extremely talented glass blowers across the nation create functional works of art, glass pipes (both dry and water pipes), that people can use to smoke their marijuana. These 'paraphernalia' are also illegal to sell in many states; however, as with many illegal things, that does not stop people from making, selling, or buying them. The government should not be arresting people and putting them in jail for creating and using such devices

- Know your rights and the laws

1st amendment - free speech, assembly, and religion

4th amendment - improper search and seizure

5th amendment - self-incrimination

- What Can I Do To Reform the Law?

Get involved with NORML! Come to our events, rallies, and meetings. Donate time or money. You can write a letter to your government representatives. You can run for local office on a platform of drug law reform. One thing you can do is vote your conscience during election time, and take advantage of and know your rights. If you're ever on a jury, you can use the powers of jury nullification to vote a non-violent person innocent of drug crimes, regardless of what the law says. For more information, check out

<http://www.phillynorml.org/>,

http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=3443 , and

<http://www.pages.drexel.edu/~dsonorml/howhelp.html>.

Or, you may use this form to add yourself as a member:

Name: _____

E-mail address: _____

Phone number: _____

Send to:

PhillyNORML

Email: info@phillynorml.org

1234 Market St

Phone: 215-268-7087

P.O. Box 36687

Philadelphia, PA 19107



National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws - Philadelphia Chapter

- Principles of Responsible Use

- Cannabis is for **Adults Only**
- **No Driving** while Intoxicated
- **Setting:** There is a time and place for everything
- **Resist Abuse:** Moderation is key
- **Respect Rights of Others:** No peer pressure



- Personal choice comparison

In a free society, an adult has the choice to be one's own master and have control over one's own body. If this choice includes smoking a plant, then this is his or her prerogative. Some people choose to do things which are much more physically dangerous or harmful, such as rock climbing, drinking alcohol, flying airplanes, skydiving, working with electricity, or eating fatty foods. Most of those examples are much more dangerous than smoking a pipe or cigarette of cannabis. The simple fact is, in over 5,000 years of recorded history, nobody has ever died from smoking marijuana.

- Safety aspects

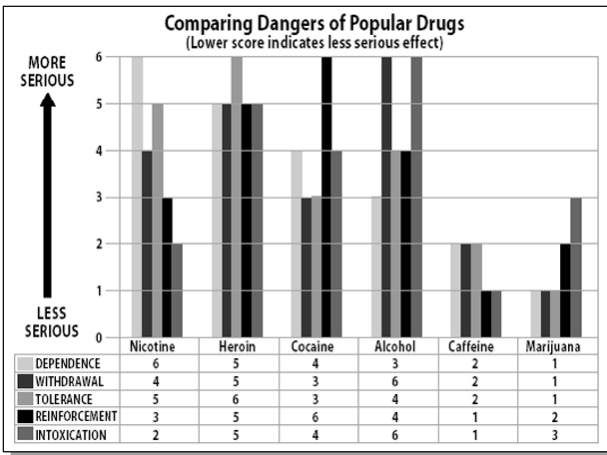
Marijuana is so safe that it would be almost impossible to overdose on it. Doctors determine how safe a drug is by measuring how much it takes to kill a person (they call this the LD50) and comparing it to the amount of the drug which is usually taken (ED50). The values for marijuana makes it hundreds of times safer than alcohol, tobacco, or caffeine. According to DEA Judge Francis Young, "Marijuana in its natural form is one of the safest therapeutically active substances known to man."

- Safety aspects (cont.)

Marijuana addiction is a topic of controversial debate. Studies have shown that infrequent marijuana usage is not physically addictive. While some may believe that the increasing numbers of people going into rehab for marijuana indicates that it does contain addictive properties, rising trends in drug-related court-sentencing indicate that the hike in these figures merely reflects the amount of people choosing rehab over jail time under a plea bargain. While the War on Marijuana is being waged, one can only expect these numbers to increase. Under legalization, kids would face even more limited access to marijuana, therefore stifling the amount who are admitted to rehab. Specifically:

1.) **58.1%** of all marijuana referrals to treatment were from the criminal justice system.

2.) Only **16.6%** of marijuana referrals to treatment were from individuals (that includes parents), which is where you would expect a large figure if, in fact, marijuana addiction (particularly in youths) were a real problem.



- Addiction/Danger Comparison

As marijuana's addictive properties, let's consider it in comparison to some other drugs. Research indicates that marijuana is significantly less potentially harmful than alcohol, nicotine, and caffeine, all of which are legal. Surely, if those legal drugs can be used responsibly by the public, can marijuana? We say **"YES, IT CAN"**.

- Laws similar to alcohol

Marijuana is an intoxicant - that fact is not under debate. Some tasks simply should not be performed while under its influence. While it doesn't impair your judgment in the same manner that alcohol does, it does alter your perceptions, sometimes immensely, based on various factors. For instance, we support a mandate that each user must be at least 21 years of age before one may smoke marijuana. A legal system where stores are required to card purchasers would aid in keeping it away from children, and cafés or bars with a license would have the option of opening section in their establishment for smoking and/or purchase. Proper regulation should be in effect, but the current laws are draconian and harmful.

Since 1973, 12 state legislatures -- Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Ohio and Oregon -- have enacted versions of marijuana decriminalization. In each of these states, marijuana users no longer face jail time (nor in most cases, arrest or criminal records) for the possession or use of small amounts of marijuana. According to national polls, voters overwhelmingly support these policies. In Oregon, voters reaffirmed their state's decriminalization law by a 2-1 margin in a statewide referendum. In 2005, citizens Denver effectively legalized marijuana after the activist group SAFER directly compared it to alcohol. In March, 2006, a Zogby poll commissioned by NORML determined that **46%** of Americans already want marijuana legalized and regulated by the United States the same way alcohol is.

- Under 18 years. Developmental Issues

According to cognitive development research, the human brain, before the age of 18, is constantly making and losing neural connections. Using a psychotropic agent like marijuana before 18 could be dangerous to a child's development, and should be avoided. NORML therefore declared as one of its Principles of Responsible Use: **"Adult Use Only"**. Legalization and regulation of marijuana will aid in keeping it away from children, as people who legally sell it would be bound not to sell to minors. This system works more efficiently than the unregulated black market that exists as a result of prohibition, where dealers can and do sell to minors. It is the responsibility of our leaders to do what is in the best interest of our children. Regulate marijuana.



- Legalization v.s. Criminalization

Just as Prohibition did not work for alcohol, this Prohibition of our time is not working for marijuana. In 2006, the total amount of marijuana related arrests was **829,625**. For possession alone, **738,915** people were arrested, or about 89%.

829,625 people is just the tip of the pot-smoking iceberg. That number is just the amount of people who got caught. According to the United States government, over **14 million people smoke marijuana regularly**. That means that for every person arrested for marijuana, there are almost **17** people who are not. What is shown by those numbers is that there is a great deal of demand for marijuana in the United States, and that demand is inevitably met by a black market.

90,710 people were arrested for selling or trafficking marijuana in 2004. Clearly, that demand is being satisfied. Even as people are arrested for selling or trafficking, more will take their place simply because they can charge much more money than a legal market would allow.

This tells us that the status quo is the wrong answer. It is a \$14 Billion/year failure. Legalizing it and regulating it like alcohol is simply a better, smarter alternative. How can it occur? As smokers who want a change, we have to take it upon ourselves to let our voice and opinion be known. At present, the total membership of the three biggest pro-legalization organizations (NORML, MPP, and DPA) is around 60,000. Their combined budgets are \$18,000,000 a year. Half of that's from a few rich supporters. It's estimated that there are 24,000,000 cannabis consumers in the US.