

Marijuana Solution

Frequently Asked Questions About Legalizing Marijuana in Wisconsin

Why should we introduce another vice into our society for mass consumption?

Marijuana is already widely consumed by Wisconsinites; in 2009 approximately 501,000 people admitted to using marijuana in the previous year alone. Legalization of marijuana wouldn't add a vice to our society; it would simply give another option to citizens for relaxation and recreation that is proven to be less harmful than other currently illicit substances or even legal substances such as alcohol. According to Gallup polling, a clear majority of Americans (58%) say marijuana should be decriminalized.

Why do we need to make marijuana and other cannabis products legal?

If there is a substance that is not harmful to yourself, your neighbors, or your community, it is the duty of the government to protect citizens' rights to use such a substance, and provide them with the freedom to choose the substance or other legal substances.

But marijuana is harmful to communities, right?

Wrong—the prohibition of marijuana is harmful to communities, because the prohibition of marijuana allows for an underground market. The underground market for marijuana can be taken away if marijuana is allowed to be sold by lawful businesses, and a safe, legal market is developed. Just as the prohibition of alcohol led to the heyday of organized crime in cities like Chicago under Al Capone and New York City under Lucky Luciano and Dutch Schultz (to name a few), in today's society, every community has illegal business that cashes in on the prohibition of marijuana. Our prohibition of marijuana is the single largest contributor to the survival of organized crime in the 21st century.

Why must we legalize marijuana if there are legal alternatives?

Synthetic cannabis is a highly regulated substance that is not only dangerous, but deadly. Like its alcohol prohibition predecessors, synthetics kill healthy Americans. During Prohibition, over 10,000 people died from denatured alcohol poisoning; this statistic is also representative of the poisoning that occurs from artificial cannabinoids. As it has gained popularity, synthetic marijuana has contributed to tens of thousands of emergency room visits and numerous deaths in the last few years. Meanwhile, natural cannabinoids such as marijuana have recorded a whopping zero deaths in over 2000 years of popular usage.

Won't legalization make marijuana more available for children, adolescents, and young adults?

Not necessarily. The legalization of marijuana simply creates greater supply for adults and in no way creates an environment that is saturated with marijuana for children, as marijuana already saturates American high schools. Marijuana and other cannabis products would actually be less available to Wisconsin youth than alcohol, which can be found anywhere from gas stations to restaurants to liquor stores, while only licensed distributors and pharmacies would be allowed to sell cannabis products. Nowadays, over 85% of American high school seniors say that marijuana is easily or very easily available; the high school market for marijuana would actually be diminished by the availability of safe, high quality marijuana.

Marijuana can be dangerous if it is laced with other drugs or improperly grown, so why should we introduce these dangers into our society?

Actually, legalization of marijuana would ensure the quality and safety of a product that hundreds of thousands of Wisconsinites use annually. Businesses selling marijuana would have to undergo quality control examination and botanical compound testing that must meet certain standards. Like any grocery produce, the only harms to the customer occur when the plant is diseased or damaged by chemicals. Introducing regulation into a widely used product will leave customers with an assuredly better product than what could be found on the street, and a safer experience.

Drunk driving is already a problem in Wisconsin, so how would you address high driving?

High-driving standards have been implemented in states with legal medicinal marijuana already, and more effective and immediate sobriety tests are being developed every day to help officers identify those breaking the law, and to help legal users avoid accidental incrimination. Although blood testing is the most reliable and consistent mode of determination, breathalyzers are now used for field testing in Colorado and seem to be the most applicable solution to date.

Won't hard drug use increase because marijuana is a gateway to other drugs?

First, scientists have been unable to establish a causal link between marijuana usage and other, harder drug use. Drugs such as alcohol and nicotine show much stronger links to harder drug use than marijuana. Also, the legalization of marijuana would separate the markets for marijuana and other illicit drugs. Users of harder drugs often first make the transition to harder drugs through their dealer of marijuana or a connection of that dealer. By separating the market for hard drugs and a benign drug like marijuana, customers can buy marijuana in a legal setting without the bridge to harder drugs through an illegal dealer.

What's the benefit of legalizing marijuana in Wisconsin?

The government would save millions of dollars on prohibition enforcement costs by legalizing marijuana. Marijuana arrests waste precious resources; 90 percent of arrests are for simple possession. Each arrest unnecessarily costs taxpayers money and takes several law enforcement officers to process. Additionally, the state could generate revenue through the legal sale of marijuana that would otherwise have gone into the underground market.