

# A Proposal to Reform Marijuana Laws:



## What factors have Influenced a more Positive Perspective on the use of Thesis

## History

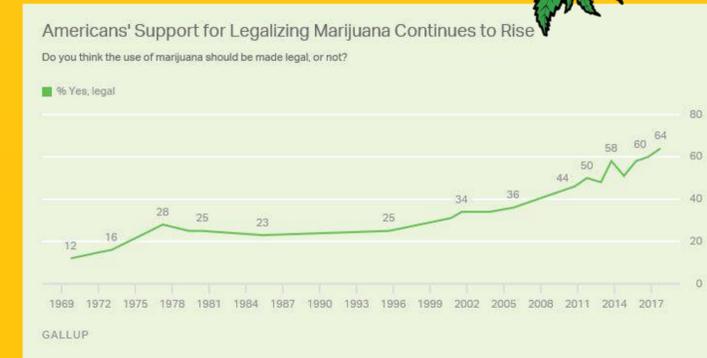
## Marijuana? Maquiyyah Spears Melisa Naylor, Soc 3

After the Mexican Revolution in 1910, there was an influx of Mexican immigrants traveling into the United States. Along with them they brought with them their customs, culture, native language and the infamous cannabis. The American media demonized the Mexican immigrants and called them disruptive, claiming the cause of this disruptive behaviors was due to the cannabis plant without any scientific evidence or studies done to prove this. This painted an image in the American people's minds, the use of marijuana gives Mexicans superhuman strength to become violent and solicit sex from white women. The Marijuana Tax Act of 1937, was set in place to effectively ban the use and sale of the drug. As shown before in American history with the first anti-drug law on the Chinese immigrant in 1875, the prohibition on the substance was in place to detain a race of immigrants solely based on racist underpinnings and discrimination. The cannabis plant was later placed as a schedule 1 substance, which is on the same level as Heroin, the most dangerous and addictive drug.



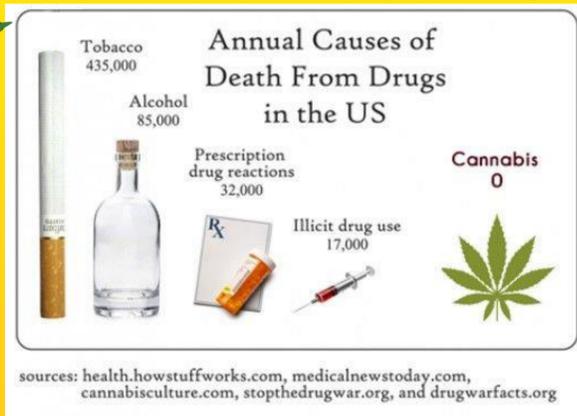
## Society and Economic Benefits

- Since marijuana is still a schedule 1 drug, anyone who is arrested for possession of the drug under the law will be charged as heavily as drugs such as meth, heroin, or cocaine. Blacks are 14 percent of regular drug users but are 37 percent of those arrested (Human Right Watch, 2013). Legalizing marijuana for medical and recreational use will abolish race-related corruption in America, providing police and the courts more money through tax revenue, and more time to focus on more serious and violent crimes.
- The CEO of New Frontier Data, Giadha Aguirre De Carcer stated, "These number confirm that cannabis is a major economic driver and job-creation engine for the U.S economy" (Borchardt, 2017). She also projected the cannabis industry to exceed \$24 billion by 2025. As well as creating 300,000 jobs by 2020 that will lead to a positive economic force for America.



Positive perspectives on marijuana has changed throughout generations. In today's society, there are mixed emotions on the subject of legalizing marijuana for recreational and medical use across the United States. Expanding my knowledge on marijuana with the history of its origins and where the negative annotations have come from, I've learned that marijuana needs to be shown in a more positive light through all of its advantages. As reported in William Walker's Drug Policy "25 million people smoke marijuana at least once a month" (Walker, 1992, p. 5) and the number have increased since then. Due to these reported numbers of users, it sparked the debate over the proposal to reform marijuana laws. Looking into factors such as the history of marijuana, the dangers compared to other legal drugs, the social and economical benefits, and pop culture influences of the positive perspectives for the legalization of marijuana.

## Marijuana vs. Legal Drugs



- Marijuana is one of the least toxic drugs (Merino, 2016).
- According to research [by Peter N.S. Hoaken and Sherry H. Stewart] published in the journal *Addictive Behaviors*, "Alcohol is clearly the drug with the most evidence to support a direct intoxication-violence relationship," whereas, "cannabis reduces the likelihood of violence during intoxication."

## Pop Culture Influences

The mere exposure of marijuana in pop culture's television shows, movies and music has lead to a huge change in liking and/or experimenting with the drug. The depiction of marijuana in these main-stream medias subliminally send messages to their viewers that marijuana isn't as bad as the world once thought. Tv shows such as Weeds and Disjointed storylines advocate for the legalization of marijuana, and other such as The Office, Shameless, and many more feature some of their characters smoking the drug but not as the main focus.



## Medical Uses

Marijuana is already proven to treat certain incurable diseases such as:

- |            |                                    |
|------------|------------------------------------|
| Cancer     | Arthritis                          |
| Epilepsy   | Multiple Sclerosis                 |
| PTSD       | Chronic pain                       |
| Aids & HIV | Alzheimer's and many more diseases |
| Asthma     |                                    |

according to many clinically proven studies experimented on participants and animals with these diseases (Franciosi, 2017).



## Conclusion

Looking more into the history of marijuana, the states have begun legalization of recreational and/or medical marijuana, the economic and job creations benefits, discriminating the heavy penalty schedule 1 drug and the medical benefits of marijuana should be enough to call into action to reform marijuana laws all across the United States. With more than half of America's support of legalizing marijuana should henceforth a change to marijuana laws in America. Within the Drug Policy book William reported "The political scientist Morris J. Blackman and Kenneth E. Sharpe noted 'Though there is nothing new about a drug problem, the general perception is that America is under siege'" (Walker, 1992, p. 7). As shown from the graph on the right these prolonged efforts of America's views on marijuana have changed from resistance to acceptance.