

## Student's Essay: 'Legalize Marijuana'

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Here is the essay that a student presented at Peninsula High School in Purdy on Tuesday morning. While presenting it, the student took out a marijuana joint, lit it, and began smoking it, police said. See [KIROTV: complete story](#)

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Persuasive essay

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### Legalize Marijuana

Can I see a show of hands how many people here have ever smoked Cannabis sativa, commonly known as marijuana? I see none of you raised your hand. Well obviously no one would want to admit to a criminal activity in front of their teacher. But why is it that smoking pot is so taboo in our society? After all numerous famous intellectuals support marijuana. Al Gore is considered by many to be the leading figure in climate change awareness and environmental preservation. But few people know that Al Gore also supports the legalization of marijuana. The famed German philosopher Freidrich Nietzsche once said, "If one seeks relief from unbearable pressure one is to eat hashish". The founding father of our nation George Washington, said, "Make the most of the Indian hemp seed, and sow it everywhere!" Marijuana is one of the safest medicinal substances on the planet and is supported by many acclaimed celebrity role models. Famous Hollywood actor Johnny Depp says, "I'm not a big pothead or anything like that... but weed is much, much less dangerous than alcohol". Other well known supporters of marijuana include Snoop Dogg, all of the Marley family, Niel Young, Willie Nelson, Michael Phelps, Chris Farley, Al Gore, Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, Nietzsche, Barack Obama, John Adams, James Madison, JFK, and of course myself. A total of 11 United States presidents either grew, smoked, or supported the legalization of Marijuana. With the support of some of the greatest thinkers and world leaders of all time it's a wonder that marijuana is still illegal.

"Government ties is really why the government lies" - Immortal Technique.

Common Misconceptions about marijuana are set about by high end government officials who think only of themselves and own their prosperity. For instance few people know the history of weed and the means by which it was criminalized.

Most of you have probably seen "Reefer Madness", the ridiculous propaganda film set about by the U.S. government to discourage the use of marijuana. The movie debuted in 1936 making arbitrary claims, calling Cannabis "The devils weed", and stating that weed is more dangerous than cocaine or opium. This was the outlook of the government at the turn of the century, but in fact pot was smoked as early as

2700 BC, in China. In 500 AD marijuana spread to Europe and Africa where it was cultivated and smoked for its medicinal qualities. By 1545 marijuana had been introduced to the New World where it was grown as a cash crop alongside tobacco and cotton. Sold in bars throughout the Americas pot was seen as tobacco's little brother. It is reported that several of our founding fathers including Benjamin Franklin and George Washington smoked ganja out of water hookahs with Turkish emissaries shortly after the revolutionary war. After this experience both Franklin and Washington began to grow weed for themselves. At the turn of the 20th century marijuana began to gain popularity and by the 1920's was the drug of choice for America's youth. Historians say this popularity is what led to its prohibition. But history itself tells a different story. Whenever something be it an idea, substance, or social behavior, becomes popular, American companies brand and market it for all it's worth. Take for example punk rock which originally was a counterculture but through marketing was assimilated into mainstream society. So why is it that the same fate was not suffered by marijuana, why was it made illegal?

In 1937 the first official action was taken against weed, the Marihuana Tax Act. The act itself did not criminalize the possession of cannabis but levied a tax on anyone dealing the substance. This didn't just mean the buds anything with hemp or hemp oil in it was essentially taxed out of business. A legitimate dealer was required to have a tax stamp but no stamps were ever printed. These over elaborate regulations prevented marijuana from being a profitable source of income. In reference to the International Opium Convention of 1928 Cannabis sativa was considered a drug and all state governments had some kind of laws against its consumption. Today it is generally accepted that these hearings included incorrect, excessive, and unfounded arguments. The Marijuana Tax Act was introduced to the U.S. congress by "Drug Czar" Harry Anslinger, a man who had no sense of morals and may have had NPD (narcissistic personality disorder), not to mention his pig faced features. Anslinger is where the conspiracy starts. 1937, the year the tax act was passed, was coincidentally the same year that the Decorticator Machine was invented, with this new technology the hemp industry would have been able to take over competing industries virtually overnight. "Popular Mechanics" predicted that hemp would be America's first billion dollar crop. William Hearst, a corporate business owner, possessed enormous acreage of forest. His land and paper making company would have lost tremendous value and eventually gone bankrupt had the tax act not been passed. Hearst reportedly had strong influence in Congress and his interest in preventing hemp production is easily explained. DuPont, a chemical company that was involved in other industries, also had a hand in the conspiracy. At the time of the Marihuana Tax Act DuPont was patenting a new acid process for producing wood pulp based paper. With the boom of the hemp industry this invention would have been useless. DuPont was also in the railroad car industry. According to their own records wood pulp products accounted for 80% of all DuPont's railroad car loadings for the 50 years prior to 1937. 80% of all their profits would have been lost with a hemp takeover. Two years earlier, in 1935, DuPont developed nylon, a substitute for hemp rope. Nylon was equal in strength and quality but with the Decorticator Machine would not have been cost effective when

sold alongside hemp. Even with hemp eliminated nylon was not extremely profitable. The year after the tax was passed DuPont came out with rayon, a very cost effective fiber that would not have been able to compete with the strength and durability of hemp. Harry Anslinger, the man who proposed the Marihuana Tax Act, was also a CEO of DuPont, and would have stood to lose millions had marijuana not been driven out of business. Anslinger, who was married to Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon's niece, was appointed to lead the FBN (Federal Bureau of Narcotics). It's widely believed that his relationship with Mellon is what earned him the promotion. Harry Anslinger's first action as commissioner was to pass the Marijuana Tax Act. Reasoning behind Anslinger, Hearst, and DuPont was for no moral or medical issues. They fought to criminalize marijuana to save their business and to save money. It's simply another example of capitalist pigs taking advantage of their power and manipulating the law for personal gain. Marijuana continued to be present in society throughout the 40's and 50's. During this time it came to be associated with the rise of rock n' roll. The hippie movement of the 1960's and 70's was largely involved in experimental drug use. Artists such as The Beatles and Jimi Hendrix experimented with drugs like acid and heroin. Their fans followed suit but Mary Jane remained America's drug of choice. The increased support of the environmentalist movement also supported the use of weed. Hemp can be made into paper that is equivalent to paper made from trees, without destroying the rainforests. After all the first, third and final drafts of the Declaration of Independence were all written on hemp paper. At anti-Vietnam protests many people could be seen smoking pot. This fueled the idea that marijuana should be legal, and in the late 60's the first serious calls for legalization were made.

In 1975 weed supporters around the United States celebrated a victory as Alaska decriminalized the use and possession of small amounts of Cannabis. Until, in 1990, residents voted to recriminalize the substance. During those 15 years Alaska prospered and its economy was the highest it had been in years. Calling it a "dangerous experiment" the DEA's stated reason for the recriminalization was that "teenagers used marijuana at twice the national average". I think it's pretty obvious that when a substance is legalized it will be used more than when it was illegal. Had we kept the same policy throughout history alcohol should have been recriminalized shortly after the repealing of the 18th amendment due to an increase in alcohol consumption. Several other countries have attempted various forms of legalizing drugs, in the Netherlands marijuana is illegal but under certain restrictions its consumption is allowed. The coffee shops of Amsterdam are renowned worldwide as a pot-smokers Mecca. Coffee shops are allowed to sell under 5 grams of marijuana as long as it is smoked on the premises. One of the opposition's most acclaimed arguments is that legalizing marijuana will lead to an increase in crime rates. The only way to prove this theory is through real life experience. The only domestic experience we have with legalized pot was in Alaska in the 70's and 80's. Government analysis showed that there was no change in the crime rate for these years. All other claims about the marijuana-crime correlation are mere speculation. The fact is that Amsterdam has a lower crime rate than any major U.S. city. One could argue that the Alaskan experiment actually benefited the crime rate. As a

whole, the national crime rate went up from 1975 to 1990, while Alaska's remained the same.

Other Cannabis antagonists look to Switzerland's Needle Park experiment to justify marijuana's legal status. People in Needle Park were allowed to openly purchase and use drugs without police intervention. The idea was to give addicts a "clean and safe" environment to inject heroin. To compare this with legalizing marijuana is absolutely absurd. First, in terms of classification marijuana and heroin are completely different. Heroin is a level five highly addictive drug that causes long term brain damage as well as damage to the central nervous system. A heroin addict will experience collapsed veins, infection of the heart lining, abscesses, and liver disease. Not to mention second hand use of needles often leads to full blown accounts of AIDS. Marijuana on the other hand has its own category and no proven health detriments. The results of Needle Park cannot be compared to those of legalizing marijuana. Your parents have probably told you that smoking pot causes lung cancer and brain damage. Unfortunately they were probably teenagers in the 70's and smoked pot themselves so their very objection to weed is extremely hypocritical. The U.S. government provides facts and statistics that seem to demonstrate the pernicious nature of marijuana. Let's take a look at the so called facts that the DEA claims are results of the habitual smoking of Cannabis sativa. First, and I quote, "Marijuana is an addictive drug". That my friends is an outright lie. All clinical studies including those conducted by the government have concluded that marijuana contains no addictive properties. A person can become chemically dependent on the drug but that is radically different than an addiction. Another study regulated by the government studied 182 "random" fatal truck accidents. It just so happened that in these "random" accidents marijuana was present in as many of the drivers as alcohol. The National Transportation Safety Board then determined that marijuana is just as dangerous as alcohol while driving. The reasoning behind this argument has more than several flaws. First of all marijuana can stay in a persons system for more than 2 weeks, there is no way to tell that the drivers were high at the time of their accidents. Now I'm not an expert but I know that 182 is not a large enough number to be considered reliable research. To study 182 of 5 ¼ million accidents, .0034%, and make apocryphal claims based on that research shows ineptitude beyond that of any man disposed to devote his life to a hierarchy of pious infidels who understand nothing of the nature and complexity of life.

Other major concerns of consuming marijuana are lung and brain damage, as well as memory loss. According to the UCLA School of Medicine "marijuana does not impair long term memory". Weed can cause short term memory loss but only while under the influence, the same can be said for alcohol and many over the counter sleeping medications. Brain damage that does occur is not because of any chemical property in ganja, but because the brain is deprived of oxygen for so long that brain cells are killed. For any self acclaimed pot smoker that's an easy fix, just don't hold your hits in for so long. One of the studies that is referred to the most was performed on monkeys in which they suffered severe brain damage. It was only

until recently in careful review of the study that we discovered that the monkeys were breathing pure THC for over a minute, that lack of oxygen is what killed the brain cells, not the marijuana. The other substantial health concern is over lung function. Also according to the UCLA School of Medicine “neither the continuing nor intermittent marijuana smokers exhibited any significantly different rates of lung function as compared to those individuals who never smoked marijuana”. The study was conducted on 243 pot smokers over an 8 year period. Another of the governments’ critical expostulations against legalizing marijuana is that pharmaceutical companies have developed a synthetic THC pill called Marinol. But Marinol is substantially different than marijuana. First, it’s not real THC; there is not one part of the Cannabis sativa plant in Marinol. It’s a bunch of chemicals that some scientist mixes up in a lab. Second Marinol is only available through prescription, so it’s incontrovertibly not the same as legalizing marijuana. Not only is it very hard to obtain a prescription, the requirements exclude nearly everyone. You must either be a cancer patient who underwent chemotherapy or be an AIDS patient who has appetite loss. Both diseases have no cure and are generally fatal. So the government won’t let you take Marinol unless you have a virtual death sentence. If I have a malignant disease I’m not going to take the time to get a government prescription, I’m going to smoke the real thing. So please don’t feed me spurious claims that legal marijuana already exists.

Now that I have addressed the supposed health detriments let’s take a look at the medical benefits of Cannabis. As mentioned above marijuana has been infallibly proven to relieve the vomiting and nausea that come with chemotherapy. Many cancer patients have said that marijuana was the best treatment for their symptoms. I interviewed a cancer patient who has miraculously over come the disease, for privacy reasons I won’t reveal their name but when asked about the effects of marijuana the interviewee said, “I would not have lived if I didn’t smoke lots of marijuana”. Isn’t it interesting that cancer, one of the world’s deadliest, incurable diseases, is treated with marijuana, an illegal drug? Marijuana is also used for treating multiple sclerosis and several mood disorders. After smoking small amounts of marijuana patients are said to be relaxed and stress free. Unlike alcohol which is a depressant, Cannabis can be used to treat low level depression. Most depression is caused by stress; smoking pot relieves stress and thus relieves depression. Glaucoma is yet another disease that smoking weed will treat. Glaucoma is an optical disease that leads to permanent damage of the optic nerve endings and resultant visual fields, which can ultimately progress to blindness. Glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness in the world and doctors predict that this number will increase as longevity also increases. Symptoms of glaucoma include intraocular pressure, patches of vision loss, headaches, and pain behind the eyeball. Despite making the eyes red marijuana actually lowers intraocular pressure and can prevent as well as cure Glaucoma all together. As you can see marijuana has copious medical uses and little to no medical handicaps. For it to be illegal while tobacco and alcohol are legal is absolute madness.

Like any substance marijuana can be abused, but it is impossible to overdose on.

The most common problem associated with marijuana abuse is lethargic behavior, but does not cause serious health or social concerns. Overuse of alcohol will result in an inability to walk, stand, or even death, whereas overuse of weed will simply put a person to sleep. 40% of all fatal car accidents are caused by alcohol while no car accidents ever have been directly caused by marijuana. Alcohol induces violent behavior and is often attributed to wife beating and other violent behaviors. Someone under the influence of alcohol will experience fits of rage which has often led to their own demise or the death of others, while someone who got high from marijuana will stroll around pleasantly with a smile on their face in search of the nearest McDonald's. It is as the iconoclast Bob Marley once said, "Herb is the healing of the nation, alcohol is the destruction". Cigarettes are another legal substance that are far more dangerous than some good sensimilla. Smoking cigarettes is the leading cause of lung cancer in America. Tobacco cigarettes are filled with harmful chemicals such as nicotine, rat poison, formaldehyde, ammonia, and arsenic. Both cigarettes and alcohol are immensely addictive phenomenon's that lead to very serious health problems, predominantly cancer, and ultimately death. Marijuana is considered by many to be a dangerous substance but in reality many of our legal drugs are far more portentous.

Annual American Deaths Caused by Drugs Tobacco.....	400,000
Alcohol.....	100,000
All legal drugs.....	20,000
All illegal drugs.....	15,000
Caffeine.....	2,000
Aspirin.....	500
Marijuana.....	0

In all of recorded history going back as far as 2700 BC there has never been one single human death attributed to a health problem caused by marijuana.

Not only is marijuana a safe drug with medical benefits but it could rapidly stimulate our failing economy. At its current rate of production legal marijuana generates 35.8 billion dollars per year. Profits from marijuana exceed that of corn and wheat combined. And that's just the legal margins. Revenue from illegal domestic marijuana is speculated at around 60 billion dollars a year. That's a total of 95.8 billion dollars each year excluding imports. Marijuana is considered by profuse amounts of economists to already be our nation's number one cash crop. It's already the number 1 cash crop in 12 states including California, Alaska, and Hawaii. In Washington weed is second only to apples. In 30 other states ganja is among the top three on the list of cash crops. As Thomas Jefferson said, "Hemp is of first necessity to the wealth and protection of the country". George Washington himself predicted that hemp would be our most valuable product. Economists estimate that if marijuana were legalized annual tax returns would be 6.2 billion dollars. That's over 6 billion dollars in the hands of the federal government rather than in the hands of so called drug criminals. This money could be spent on combating the flow of hard, more serpentine drugs onto our streets.

If the fact that legalizing marijuana will engender enormous sums of money isn't enough for some skeptics let's take a look at the money that it will save. Approximately 7.7 billion dollars is spent annually on law enforcement to traverse marijuana consumption. Legalizing marijuana would eliminate 100% of these costs. Another taxpayer expense that would be emphatically reduced is prison disbursements. New FBI statistics show that one marijuana smoker is arrested every 45 seconds, by the end of my speech more than 20 people will have been incarcerated on marijuana related offenses. Since 1990 5.9 million innocent Americans have been arrested on Cannabis charges, a number greater than the population of Alaska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming combined. 88% of all people in jail, a staggering 2 million, are there due to marijuana offenses. In the case that marijuana is legalized that number will be reduced to 440,000 people, a prodigious decline. The deprivation of operating prisons would also deteriorate dramatically. The cost of operating prisons comes directly out of taxpayers pockets. Currently a 40 billion dollar per year expenditure would be cut back to 8.8 billion dollars, still a gargantuan amount but much, much less than what it was. With this amount of savings and profits I find it amazing that our capitalist society hasn't already demanded the legalization of pot.

Simply selling the buds is not the only way to make money off the Cannabis sativa plant. Hemp fibers from the stalks have countless other uses. An entire hemp based industry will be created. Oil extracted from the seeds was used to lubricate gears and mechanisms in many of the original cars including Henry Ford's Model T. Hemp fiber, renown for its strength, has long been used to test the durability of other fibers. When George Bush Sr. was forced to eject from his F-50 over Vietnam, the parachute that saved his life was made from 100% hemp fiber. Hemp can be made into rope, clothing, and paper. More important than the products made will be the jobs procreated by this industry. The current unemployment rate is 8.9% as of April 2009. 8.9% sounds like a small number out of 100 but 8.9% translates to over 13.7 million people without a job. I talked about tax deficits earlier but how about the decrease in taxes if all 13.7million people got off welfare and started working in the pot industry. Though legalizing marijuana won't create all 13.7 million jobs necessary it will create some. That's a step in the right direction to resurrect our falling economy.

A common misconception is that smoking sensimilla makes a person this lazy, unexcited, useless, crippling abrasion to society. That's not true at all. Like most Americans, people who smoke pot pay taxes, love and support their families, and work hard to make a better life for their children. Suddenly they are arrested, jailed, and treated like criminals solely because they choose to relax in a way that is safer than tobacco or alcohol. State agencies frequently step in and declare children of marijuana smokers to be "in danger", and many children are placed into foster homes as a result. This causes enormous pain, suffering, and financial hardship for millions of honest American families. It also engenders distrust and disrespect for the law and criminal justice system overall. If the children of marijuana smokers are in danger than the children of cigarette smokers and alcoholics are in a situation far

more perilous. Responsible pot smokers present no threat or danger to America and there is no reason to treat them as criminals.

Many people also believe that marijuana is a gateway drug and will lead to other more dangerous drugs. It's true that most people who do hard drugs didn't immediately start out snorting cocaine or shooting heroin, but smoking pot every now and then doesn't condemn you to be some cracked out heroin fiend. As it stands right now only a small portion of sensi smokers go on to harder drugs and I'm sure that number will go down if marijuana is legalized. If kids could run down to the gas station and pick up some weed their interest in other drugs would be diminished. The only way that pot could be considered a gateway drug is if it is sold alongside hard drugs. True some pot dealers sell harder stuff but legalizing marijuana completely negates that argument. If marijuana were legal there would be no need for side street dealers who might have hard drugs on them, it could be sold in any convenience store across the country. I know for a fact that teenagers would much rather get high legally than break the law to do so. The problem is legal highs aren't readily available, the closest you can get is with cigarettes which not only taste disgusting but are extremely deleterious to your health and the health of others. Implying that smoking weed always leads to harder drugs is like saying that anyone who has ever stolen something will go on to armed piracy of oil tankers. The Somalians that hijacked those tankers probably did steal in their youth but that doesn't mean everyone who steals will end up like them. Marijuana as a gateway drug is a false implication and cannot be used in a serious discussion about legalizing marijuana. Many people also insinuate that marijuana leads people to a life of crime. The only way to test this theory is to study the results when pot is legal. Amsterdam, where marijuana is legal, has a lower crime rate than any major U.S. city. I think that soundly disproves that theory and clearly shows that smoking marijuana is not a gateway to anything illegal.

I have provided you with information, facts and statistical evidence that all point towards the legalization of marijuana. But the truth is it doesn't matter what I say until you, the people, stand up and besiege the government to re-address the litigation of marijuana. But I'm sure there are many of you thinking, "Well that's a great speech in all but I don't smoke pot so why should I care if it's legal or not?" So I have come up with several reasons why everyone should support the legalizing of marijuana. If you're politically left wing stick it to the corporal business owners who made it illegal in the first place. If your right wing, marijuana is our number 1 cash crop, legalized we can make even more money than we are now. If your Christian or adhere to the Bible, Genesis 1:29 "And God said, behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth", according to the Bible it's your god given right to grow and consume any plant on this earth, including marijuana. If you're an environmentalist or at least care about the fate of our planet, you can save the 4 billion trees that are cut down every year to make paper. I assure you hemp paper is a fine substitute. Everyone should support legalizing marijuana and everyone here now understands why. The biggest problem is that people are more inclined to suffer the sufferable that to rectify changes in their

lives. But with growing support the Cannabis sativa predicament will soon be rectified and the world as a whole will be a better place, in the words of Bob Marley, “Legalize it, don’t criticize it”.

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