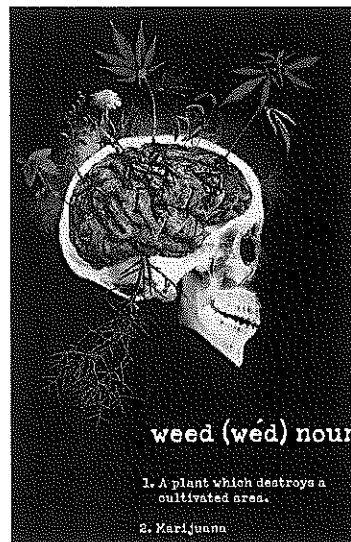


..marijuana, pot, reefer, blunts, chronic, smoke, weed, cannabis...

What to call it?

It doesn't matter.

***Just get the facts,
know the science &
dispel the myths.***



HOW HARMFUL IS **MARIJUANA** TO OUR HEALTH?

- Today's marijuana is not the marijuana of the 1960s. Marijuana has grown five to ten fold or more in potency over the past 30 years. This is not "your mother's Woodstock weed!"
- One in ten people who try marijuana become addicted to it, developing a dependence that produces intense withdrawal and cravings. If marijuana use starts in adolescence, the chances of addiction are one in six.
- Marijuana use directly affects the brain and has been linked to mental illness, psychosis, depression and significant anxiety.

WHO IS IN JAIL & PRISON FOR **MARIJUANA**?

- A rigorous analysis of who is in jail or prison for marijuana found that less than .7% of all state inmates were behind bars for marijuana possession only (with many of them pleading down from more serious crimes).
- Federal data show that the vast majority (99.8%) of federal prisoners sentenced for drug offenses were incarcerated for drug trafficking. People are not in prison for small time marijuana use.

WHY NOT TREAT **MARIJUANA** LIKE ALCOHOL?

- Under legalization, more people, not fewer, will be ensnared in the criminal justice system. A fact most people do not know is that alcohol— not cocaine, heroin or marijuana— is responsible for 2.6 million arrests every year. That is 1 million more arrests than for all illegal drugs combined. The reason? Alcohol is used so much more commonly than illegal drugs. People are being arrested for violating liquor laws, driving while intoxicated and public drunkenness (this 2.6 million number doesn't even include violent crimes that result from alcohol use.) This isn't to say that current drug policies aren't also costly to the criminal justice system. They are. But, that is precisely why we need smarter enforcement policies— not legalization— which would very likely compound the current costs to the system.

THE MYTH OF MARIJUANA TAX REVENUES

- Any tax revenue gained from legal marijuana would be quickly offset by the social costs. Let's take a look at two of our present legal substances:
 - * Federal excise taxes collected on alcohol in 2007 totaled around \$9 billion; states collected around \$5.5 billion. Combined, these amounts are less than 10% of the estimated \$185 billion in alcohol related costs we face in health care, criminal justice and workplace lost productivity.
 - * Tobacco does not yield revenue when taxed. Each year, Americans spend more than \$200 billion on the social costs of smoking, but, only about \$25 billion is collected in taxes. Marijuana legalization will increase public costs.

DRUG CARTELS, THE BLACK MARKET AND MARIJUANA

- The truth is, marijuana legalization would do nothing to diminish the power of the cartels. Primarily because marijuana accounts for only a tiny share of revenues gained by these drug trafficking groups. For them, the big money is found in illegal trade such as human trafficking, kidnapping, extortion, piracy and other illicit drugs. So, legalizing marijuana would not deter these groups from continuing to operate.

MARIJUANA HAS MEDICINAL PROPERTIES, BUT WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TO SMOKE THE PLANT IN ORDER TO DERIVE THOSE BENEFITS...

JUST LIKE WE DON'T SMOKE OPIUM TO GET THE BENEFITS OF MORPHINE!

- We should support and fast-track research to produce pharmacy-attainable, non-smoked medications based upon chemical components of marijuana. The raw marijuana plant contains nearly 500 different chemical compounds and current promising research deriving therapeutic medications from these materials is truly what is helping sick people.
- In states with medical marijuana programs, residents have abuse and dependence rates higher and not seen in other states with no such laws. In addition, the average medical marijuana card-carrying user is a 30 yr. old male with no terminal illness and a history of drug abuse. The truth is, less than 2% of medical marijuana users have cancer or AIDS. In Colorado, 75% of youth who enter treatment for marijuana abuse report obtaining the drug from someone with a medical marijuana card.
- The folks pushing for marijuana legalization found a way to make their issue resonate with regular Americans. They reframed the issue to be "voting compassionately for sick and dying people." They built a brilliant campaign around the simple message, "Marijuana is Medicine." We think it's important for you to know the other side of that message.

Thanks to Project: SAM for providing accurate and timely information about various issues concerning marijuana.

www.learnaboutsam.org



The Regional Coalition for Healthy and Safe Communities

www.centerforprevention.org

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