



Should Idaho legalize medical marijuana?

Story

Posted: Thursday, April 22, 2010 12:00 am | Updated: 2:55 pm, Fri Apr 23, 2010.

9 comments

Moscow Rep. Tom Trail is a Republican, but there aren't too many people who know him well who would give him the moniker of "conservative." He has been known to vote with Democrats on key legislation and take positions at odds with Idaho's traditionally conservative nature.

And he's just done so again. Trail wants Idaho to legalize medical marijuana. He has pushed in the past to get industrial hemp legalized, and now he's proposing legislation so the seriously ill can access medical cannabis.

The Press-Tribune editorial board could not reach a definitive conclusion on the issue, so we'll present the best arguments on both sides.

Yes, it should be legal

This is not an endorsement of blanket legalization of the drug, but rather for serious medical conditions under strict control.

It's easy to criticize Trail's proposal until you find yourself in a situation where you have a loved one who suffers from a painful condition such as brain cancer. Could you really deny your mother something that would ease her agony? Watch her suffering unnecessarily when you know there is relief available?

According to Procon.org, medical marijuana is already legal in 14 states: Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington. States that have considered or are considering legislation to legalize it are Alabama, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Mississippi and Virginia.

To those who argue that legalization or ballot measures would create more drug addicts, just consider the many thousands of people across the country who have become addicted to prescription pain killers — a legal product. Sure, there's potential for abuse, but the benefits to those suffering far outweigh that.

No, don't make it legal

Look at what's happened in California. There the whole idea of "medical" marijuana has become the punch line to a joke: "I've got a headache, dude; I need me some 'medical' pot."

Despite the best intentions to keep tight controls, legalizing medical marijuana would make it easier for anyone to get the drug — including kids. It would also reduce much of the negative stigma associated with a gateway drug that leads to other, more severe ones.

States with legalized medical marijuana have also seen an increase in

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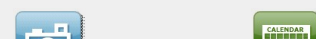
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drug-related crime. Police in Denver told ABC Tucson, Ariz., affiliate KGUN reporter Steve Nunez that the city has seen an increase in drug-related crime in the 10 years since it legalized medical marijuana. People who get their prescriptions filled for medical pot are getting mugged and robbed immediately afterwards.

Those who are in pain deserve the best medical care we can provide. Let's find ways to help them that don't produce all the negative social side effects.



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9 comments:

LegalizeNow



Posts: 1

Marijuana is not nearly as destructive as alcohol...to the body, mind, society, or family. It should absolutely be legalized.

...And Gadget, are you trying to say that agricultural crops are failing in California and Montana because there are so many pot smokers or are you just 'what if'-ing? Well, what if marijuana is legalized and taxed and within a couple of years we get out of our 'conservative' induced debt? What if thousands of young people who would have become alcoholics start smoking pot instead and dui deaths and domestic violence rates drop to record lows?

Medicinal marijuana? Whatever. If it gets us started, fine. Outright legalization is what should happen.

 LegalizeNow posted at 10:08 am. |  Report Comment |  Comment Link

MsGadget



Mr. Rosio, I re-read your post regarding how Montana Pain Management controls

dosages for medicinal marijuana. So, that seems reasonable.

I am from Montana, and I have to tell you, I've heard nothing but the opposite from my acquaintances there. For example, a roadside stand selling marijuana to the public in Great Falls. High school students dropping in to a marijuana shop after school where they stated they could purchase marijuana, and a two year old child where there was a question as to the need for it. A group in California selling marijuana brownies to pre-school teachers in the guise of a church fundraiser. These are but a few examples. Are agencies such as yours working with the State to provide required procedures/documentation so that the medicinal marijuana is controlled by other caregivers/shops?

From your description of your clinic, it seems it should be the model, but it's not what the majority is. I also have read prevention studies, as well as scientific reports -- marijuana is addictive. So, I believe we may "agree" to "disagree" on that.

In Montana, I have concern about the dwindling workforce and rapidly growing population on medicinal marijuana. I understand Montana has approximately more than 10,000 citizens with a medicinal marijuana card, with the rate growing very quickly this year -- 3,000 per month since January are being added, right? But, Montana's workforce only hovers around 400,000 right? And has a 8% unemployment rate + 10% discouraged unemployed rate, right (per Bureau of Labor Statistics). That's at least 18% unemployed. Let's say the number of Montana citizens on medicinal marijuana continues to grow at the rate of 3,000/month, and the unemployment rate continues to be high. Assuming workers under enough marijuana to take away the pain cannot "work", where is the workforce to sustain Montana?

An economy can only grow if it's workforce is productive. At 1.6%, Montana cannot afford to be making mistakes. Do you truly believe all of the 3,000 getting permits per month are in so much pain that no other pain relief would work? In only two years, at the rate of 3,000/mo., there would be 72,000 of the 400,000 workforce on medicinal marijuana unable to work.

Frankly, I would much rather see sustainable jobs (manufacturing, service, agriculture) stay in Montana because I believe people need the pride they get from working. This would also greatly increase Montana's productivity and the standard of living for Montana workers. Unfortunately, for decades, Montana has had many corporations pull out leaving the workers out of work with little options. I'd rather see people who are out of work encouraged to find gainful work they like and, separately, those who have a quantifiable medical need receive medicinal marijuana as a controlled narcotic. I believe that states considering this law need to realize legalizing medicinal marijuana may provide jobs in the short-term, but the long-term effects if a state becomes dependent on those medicinal marijuana jobs (and a large percent of the workforce is lost due to impairment of a narcotic and unable to work) will be devastating to the citizen's standard of living.

 **MsGadget** posted at 11:03 pm. |  Report Comment |  Comment Link

ravenchortle



Posts: 1

Marijuana cultivation and use should absolutely be legalized in Idaho. As someone dealing with pain from bone cancer, I know from experience that marijuana helps relieve the intense pain I have felt. When I could not sleep from the pain, marijuana was the only route I found effective to help me sleep. Yes, it is now illegal but when you deal with the level of pain I experienced you learn to do what you must to try to be human. Pain can tear a person apart. It hurts not only the person afflicted, but also that person's loved ones who have to watch the person suffer.

I am not much of a recreational pot smoker. It doesn't mix with my system for that purpose; my point being that I'm not someone advocating the drug/plant for recreational reasons (though not against it for that purpose either).

Regarding recreational use, I have to say that I've seen lots of people drinking beer and liquor driving like maniacs and/or getting into fights while I have never seen or experienced someone who just smoked pot recklessly driving or beating people up. When it comes to negative behaviors that hurt others besides the user, comparing alcohol to pot we have the wrong drug legalized.

Returning to the previous topic, I am currently taking oxycontin for pain due to having my leg amputated from the cancer. The effect that these pain killers have on the body are horrible. I do not know if a pharmaceutical grade of THC could begin to touch the pain that the oxycontin is helping to control for me, but I would be very willing to try it if it were available. The side effects of oxy and other narcotics can be devastating. Getting off of these drugs is a challenge. They are highly addictive; marijuana is not. I know this former fact due to personal use because of cancer. I know this latter fact due to personal use in my younger years

A final note: I am a plant grower and a landscaper. As a permaculture designer I focus my time on plants that have multiple values and functions. Marijuana and industrial hemp are two of the most useful plants that we have available to us as food, as

medicine, as well as for fuel, textiles, fodder, etc. I look very forward to the day when I can cultivate these multiple use plants for private use as well as toward increasing my family's income, as well as the resilience and sustainability of my community. They are wonderful plants and their legalization will help grow our local economy greatly, I am sure. No pun intended.

Legalize it!

 **ravenchortle** posted at 4:44 pm. |  Report Comment |  Comment Link

Blarney



Posts: 4

Yes.

 **Blarney** posted at 10:33 am. |  Report Comment |  Comment Link

MsGadget



Posts: 2

For the states that enact this law, I need to see regulation of medicinal marijuana as a "pain" medication. This is not being done. I categorically do not object to the use of medicinal marijuana for those in severe pain or with severe seizure complications, for example. I believe we all need to keep in mind three things: 1. Those who are already addicted to drugs not for prescribed medical needs will misuse the system for prescribed medicinal marijuana. 2. It has already been reported that children and toddlers are getting marijuana through medicinal marijuana caregivers, and there must be regulation on how much is given, and also quantifiable proof there is a genuine medicinal need. 3. Just as important, review the productivity rates of states such as California and Montana. Obviously, medicinal marijuana provides jobs and is a "consumable". However, looking at the statistics of productivity (GDP) in the years after the medicinal marijuana laws have been enacted. It is clear that other "consumable" crops, such as agriculture and cattle are declining while medicinal marijuana jobs/shops are growing at a very fast rate. So, my question to you is: If your labor force is quickly dwindling (high unemployment), and a very large percentage of your labor force is high on medicinal marijuana and cannot produce at a traditional manufacturing/service position, and what each state produces moves to marijuana production, how will that help the country in the long-run? It would seem much more sane to enact legislation that regulates medicinal marijuana, just as narcotic pain relief is regulated for those that truly need it.

 **MsGadget** posted at 8:57 am. |  Report Comment |  Comment Link

medcannabis1



Posts: 1

As the founder of Montana Pain Management INC a for-profit company that provides 15 livable wage jobs providing service to disabled community. With professional management and strict adherence to the law our clinic model can work within any community structure. The concept is medical and with our model the controls on the cannabis are to the gram and everything is accountable, from the beginning of the plant to the use by the patient. We pay income tax, and provide FREE SERVICE to our Hospice Clients, and are a MEDICAID SPEND-DOWN approved provider allowing the severely disabled the ability to use their spend down for cannabis therapy. If there is transparency and professional management many people will be served withing your communities and livable wage jobs will develop as the cannabis clinic becomes another tool for the treatment of chronic pain, aging and cancer. Look at our website and see for yourself at www.montanapm.com
R.Rosio
President
Montana Pain Management INC
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Missoula, Mt. 59802
406.728.5297

 **medcannabis1** posted at 6:12 pm. |  Report Comment |  Comment Link

pacundo



Posts: 164

Medical marijuana for serioius medical problems would be ok with me. Would this include pot for the 27 yo gang member that has meth headaches, fights with police and is on felony probaton? He already gets \$1,500 a month in social security benefits and food stamps so he can buy Papa Murphy pizza. He and many others scam the system. A huge fraud. Who is gonna pay for the dope? Tax payers I bet. I thought smoking causes lung cancer and other life threatening ailments. How about a THC pill for the terminally

ill so the dopers don't abuse herb. Just think of all the drug related crime. Drug DUI's. Muggings at the medical pot clinic.....All of the Cheetos gone from the store shelf. Check out what is happening in Cali. This did not create revenue but increased calls for police. Don't we already have enough sick, lame and lazy in this country?

 **pacundo** posted at 1:27 pm. |  Report Comment |  Comment Link

Claudio B



Posts: 16

I would not begrudge a terminally ill patient his/her medical joint to ease pain or nausea, but I see the so-called medical marijuana issue as a self-serving ploy by recreational marijuana users to decriminalize their bad habits. The main question is: do Americans need to be pacified by a drug that also promotes irresponsible behavior?

 **Claudio B** posted at 10:49 am. |  Report Comment |  Comment Link




Paul



Posts: 29

Marijuana is a plant that should be legalized. It has proven medicinal value for those suffering from a number of ailments from chronic arthritis to terminal cancer pain. Nobody has died from an overdose, nobody is violent when using marijuana. It is way past time to legalize pot. Too many people are in jails and prisons for this low level drug. Legalize it, tax it and get on with life. There are too many other things to worry about when you think about in our daily lives.

California has a measure in the ballot this fall to outright legalize marijuana. They are looking at two aspects, the tax revenue and the jail and prison population. They hope to turn this into a revenue stream for the state and a way to decrease the prison population.

 **Paul** posted at 5:05 pm. |  Report Comment |  Comment Link

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