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## Should marijuana be legal?



Staff Reporter | Posted July 31, 2008 1:30 AM



Should marijuana use be legal?

That's a question that will be debated in public now that Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA) has introduced a bill that would remove federal penalties for personal marijuana use.

Speaking at a press conference Wednesday in support of the legislation, [HR 5843](#), Frank said we "should not lock people up" or use

federal resources to stop people from using marijuana unless they are harming someone else or engaging in excessive behavior.

The new bill would eliminate federal penalties for possession of up to 100 grams (about 3½ ounces) of marijuana, and for the not-for-profit transfer of up to one ounce of marijuana.

Representatives from the drug reform lobby, including the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws ([NORML](#)), the Drug Policy Alliance ([DPA](#)) and the Marijuana Policy Project ([MPP](#)), all support the legislation. But the Bush Administration does not.

Allen St. Pierre, the executive director of NORML calls the legislation "the first time in a generation" that Congress is taking a "serious look" at reforming components of cannabis prohibition laws.

St. Pierre also praised Congressional Black Caucus members who took part in the press conference, Reps. Barbara Lee (D-CA) and William Lacy Clay (D-MO). The two CBC members argued that marijuana laws unfairly target African-Americans for arrest, and Clay blamed "a phony war on drugs" for "filling up our prisons, especially with people of color."

But representatives from the Office of National Drug Control Policy ([ONDCP](#)) attended the press conference to [rebut](#) the claims that marijuana is safe, even for medical purposes.

### Groups Say Marijuana Is Safe

Marijuana is the [third most popular recreational drug](#) in America, behind alcohol and tobacco, according to NORML. The group says nearly 80 million Americans have used marijuana and points to government surveys indicating that 20 million Americans have smoked marijuana in the past year.

"Marijuana is far less dangerous than alcohol or tobacco," says NORML. According to statistics on the group's web site, more than 400,000 die each year from tobacco smoking and 50,000 people die each year from alcohol poisoning. But marijuana, on the other hand, is "nontoxic and cannot cause death by overdose."

The federal government does not agree. "Marijuana is the blindspot of drug policy," said John Walters, director of national drug control policy. "Baby Boomers have this perception that marijuana is about fun and freedom. It isn't. It's about dependency, disease, and dysfunction," he said in a press release.



But cannabis users argue that marijuana can also be used to treat illnesses, including glaucoma, asthma, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS. Although 12 states allows medical marijuana use, the federal government does not, putting users in a position of legal limbo.

Rep. Lee said California law allows medical marijuana

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new legislation would allow people suffering from chronic pain or illness to smoke marijuana legally.

Talk show host Montel Williams [agrees](#). Williams has spoken out about his own need for medical marijuana to deal with the pain associated with multiple sclerosis. He has said he takes nearly a hundred pills a day to treat his condition, and after serving 22 years in the military, he feels he should not be made to feel like a criminal just because he needs a drug to keep him healthy and out of pain.

### Costs of Enforcement

Supporters of the legislation also argue that enforcing marijuana laws costs taxpayers \$10 billion a year. A marijuana smoker is arrested every 38 seconds, says St. Pierre.

Rob Kampia, director of the Marijuana Policy Project, said marijuana arrests outnumber arrests for "all violent crimes combined," forcing police to spend more time chasing nonviolent criminals than violent ones.

But the Bush Administration disagrees. Officials from ONDCP issued a preemptive [press release](#) on Tuesday to show that "less than one half of one percent of inmates in state prisons are serving time for marijuana possession only."

But Rep. [Frank responded](#) to this argument at the press conference, "I never understood why people thought it was a defense of a law staying on the books that it was rarely used," he said.

### Public Opinion On Marijuana

Marijuana use was [outlawed in 1937](#) in the U.S., four years after the end of Prohibition. But pressure began to reform the law in the 1970s, according to the Drug Policy Alliance.

The Netherlands passed a law in 1976 that declared cannabis a "soft drug," which was not subject to "prosecution, detection or arrest" in certain amounts. And in 1996, voters in California approved Proposition 215, which allows sick and dying patients to use marijuana for medicinal purposes.

"The vast amount of human activity ought to be [none of the government's business](#)," Frank said at the news conference on Wednesday. "I don't think it is the government's business to tell you how to spend your leisure time," he said.

Although [most Americans support](#) efforts to reduce penalties or decriminalize personal recreational use of marijuana, they do not support legalizing marijuana altogether. A [Gallup poll](#) in 1995 found a third of Americans support legalizing marijuana, up from just 12 percent in 1969, but still not a majority.

Support for medical marijuana, on the other hand, is much higher, even among older Americans. A 2004 poll conducted for the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) found the overwhelming majority of seniors support legalizing marijuana for medical purposes. Sixty nine percent of those 70 and older agreed that adults [should be allowed](#) to legally use marijuana for medical purposes if a physician recommends it.

The issue of decriminalizing drug use may be controversial in a presidential election year when candidates are trying not to offend voters. But Rep. Frank's bill is not expected to come to a full committee vote until 2009.



Articles written by a Staff Reporter are unsigned reports from a member of the staff.

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## Comments 55

### Legalize Marijuana

2008-07-31

02:16:55

The amount of support for legalization is overwhelming! Twenty five million Americans currently use it, millions more non-users are fed up with funding a prohibition that returns nothing of benefit to them. The prohibition has caused huge distrust towards the government and the police. Legalization is the "only" thing that can put that right. Marijuana doesn't kill brain cells. Nor does it cause emphysema or any type of cancer. It can't be od'ed on and it's never caused a single fatality, ever. Legalization will force the criminals out of the marijuana market and allow for age-based restrictions to be placed on its sale. These are good things that must be supported.

### Mary Jane

2008-07-31

03:15:06

Agreed. You would think they would learn from prohibition - making marijuana illegal has pushed it underground and made it a dangerous market... legalize it and you can regulate it and tax it so it will both be safe and generate revenue, not to mention save police time and money fighting this fake war on drugs. To any that still think it should be illegal - why? As long as they are not hurting anyone, how is a responsible adult smoking a natural plant for medical or recreational purposes ANY of the government's business?

### Anonymity

2008-07-31

03:22:19

A question for dinosaurs.

### nunzio bagliere

2008-07-31

04:41:36

I suffer with massive depression and if i ever inhale smoking pot i know for a fact this leaf that is natured grown would give me a relief of my mood swings and sleep disorders and also would give me a lift with feeling a pleasure in stead of being prescribed drugs that i must suffer with side effects as i did being prescribed ZYPREXA made from eli lilly which gave me DIABETES type two for life in which there was no warning label on the drug and the FDA said that we once tested it and its safe but the FDA had said for years that pot is a addictive and dangerous and need more study - to me that is BULL and the drug companies do pay much money to keep Marijuana in the dark closet to our Washington Elected official s - WE NEED CHANGE and WE NEED THIS LEAF which is nick name reefer or pot for people to be allowed to smoke it who suffers with physical or emotional pain to be allowed and the LAWS REMOVED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE from NUNZIO BAGLIERE SYRACUSE N.Y EMAIL NUNZIO61@VERIZON.NET

### cabinntn

2008-07-31

05:55:18

think about this, say you have a city with 2 concerts going on, one only serves liquor, the other only provides marijuana. The police captain ask's for volunteers. Now unless you have officers that just love using their night stick, ALL would sign up for the one with marijuana use...and liquor is legal??? sheeesh

### Tandy

2008-07-31

08:10:39

Yes! it should be legal. We waste too much money prosecuting people for using this harmless plant.

### 'lightis

2008-07-31

09:04:36

Tax it. Everybody wins, no money is lost. Either regulate and distribute it through taxable channels. Or ticket those that do it publicly. Easy fix, without loss of revenue. We don't need baby sitters when it comes to recreation on a non-lethal substance. There's far worse substances you can legally obtain. This hypocrisy must end.

### Tandy

2008-07-31

09:51:43

I agree--let's tax it. Marijuna is California's most valuable cash crop. If we taxed it, that's be enough money to pay for universal healthcare...not to mention the money saved for paying for prison terms.

### Alex

2008-07-31

11:07:27

No, its just a starter drug and one of the reasons crime is out of control. Montel Williams behind this? Please. Tax it? Just how is the typical pot head going to pay a tax on it, without stealing something to do so?

### Filipe

2008-07-31

11:27:09

Alex, most potheads I know have jobs. Yes, if your the type to move on to harder drugs then Marijuana is a logical step on the path downward, but so would be perscription pain killers like Vicodin and Perkasel, and those are legal. Someone who's willing to steal to get their "fix" isn't doing it for pot, as it is not the kind of habit forming substance that would cause these dependancies.

### Bob Gunner

2008-07-31

11:34:02

Visit MPP's website, they have a lot of information as well as click to send notes of support to people in power. Educate yourself and work for change. Each of us together is strong, we can do it, words on blogs will mostly be forgotten, but your vote will not! Legalization will

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happen, when we work together. We are strong together. Legalize!

**truth**  
2008-07-31  
12:07:07

"No, its just a starter drug and one of the reasons crime is out of control. Montel Williams behind this? Please. Tax it? Just how is the typical pot head going to pay a tax on it, without stealing something to do so?" A starter drug? What about caffeine? Tylenol? Sugar? Chocolate? Antidepressants handed out like candy by doctors for any ailment? The lies stop NOW. Marijuana is a harmless plant of nature, it is expensive because of the war waged on it. Legalize marijuana and the price drops. All plants should be legal, the war should be waged on METH and other harmful substances bastardized from drug store shelves. Big pharma is the real drug dealer, with a TLA protecting them from competition from citizens. The lies about marijuana are being peeled away by truth from MPP, NORML, and other like minded organizations. Read about Marc Emery (BC3), and others who have fought for freedom. Private prisons, law enforcement, big pharma, alcohol pushing corporations, and more all profit from marijuana being illegal. Search Google News for "marijuana" and read about how many people have their lives ruined because of the rabid obsession with waging war on marijuana. Article after article about marijuana being found and people's lives being ruined. It's immoral for tax dollars to go to this type of filth. Educate and legalize, the real "pot" heads are not the people smoking marijuana, but the losers enforcing a war on our civil liberties. Support sanity, legalize, and focus law enforcement's attention on real criminals. Put an end to drug lord's use of marijuana as a source of income, legalize and watch marijuana's price fall. Visit LEAP's (law enforcement AGAINST prohibition) website and learn more.

**M1450**  
2008-07-31  
12:27:53

Alex: you seem sooo misinformed about marijuna, its users, and the fantastic potential for tax it can provide.

Its not a "Gateway" Drug: There have been more than enough studies (one of the most important ones was conducted by UC Berkley), which shows that marijuna is not a "gateway" drug...people who are inclined to drug abuse will abuse hard drugs rather they try weed first or not.

What exactly is a Pot Head?: It always amazes me when people say that weed is for criminals, druggies, or unmotivated people...I live in a VERY affluent neighborhood of highly successful professionals, and you can't go down the street without smelling marijuna coming out people's windows. These aren't so-called "pot heads" these are productive, law abiding citizens who enjoy alittle herb.....And I am a successful business person, and I smoke weed...all of my friends (mostly doctors, lawyers, and other professionals) smoke weed also....none of us use any harder drugs. Most people tend to use it as a way to relax (similar to a cocktail).

We can't make generalized judgements about something based on old-school opinions.

**Shan**  
2008-07-31  
12:51:55

The Governor of California says that Marijuana is not a drug. It's a leaf!

**M1450**  
2008-07-31  
12:52:42

To Alex: I forgot to discuss how taxing marijuna could work. We make billions of sales tax from tobacco through assessing a sales taxes. The way it works is actually quite simple:

Step 1 (License Distributors): The state/federal government will license distributors (stores, pharmacists, or private businesses) to sell it.

Step 2 (Collecting Taxes): The Fed/state government empowers the distributors assess a sales tax at the point of sale. And they send in the taxes the have assessed on a quarterly basis...

Therefore, Alex, taxation working isn't reliant on the "trpical pot heads" remembering to pay taxes...

**Alex**  
2008-07-31  
13:18:58

Wow, the weed heads, rich or poor, they are weed heads, are out in force with the twisted logic that being stoned is a good thing, amazing. Thank God it will never be legalized, but, thanks for giving all the reasons why it is and should remain a illegal drug. Next you'll be saying crack should be legal since it too "relaxes" people. What about meth? The government has no business in the drug business, when they can't even handle every day issues that affect people, and, the last thing this country needs is another government agency that does not work and people paid too much to do it. Let those who need it medically get it medicinally, I have no issue with it, but, those who want to get a fix or whatever it is it gives you, keep on paying the thugs who sell it.

**Zach**  
2008-07-31  
15:23:38

Comparing weed to crack and meth is one of the dumbest arguments I've ever heard. Crack is a stimulant by they way, never tried it, but I know it definitely doesn't relax you. Alex I bet you've never even tried smoking weed you just feel like having an opinion on it. I don't see how anyone who has ever been high could reasonably defend the amount of money being spent trying to stop its supposed "dangerous" effects. I'm about to graduate from a well respected university with a 4.0 and I smoke all the time. I think everyone needs to just relax and quit fighting the issue when keeping it illegal doesn't make it any harder for me to buy it,

it just costs everyone money pretending like it does.

**MidwestGuy**  
2008-07-31  
15:38:57

Alex, please leave lillyville for a second. I do not and have not ever smoked weed. But I know many who do, lawyers and doctors included. Comparing a natural leaf to a manufactured drug is akin to comparing water to isopropyl alcohol. Suggesting the "feel good" factor of weed is akin to a crack heads fix is also silly. Both alcohol and cigarettes also provide a feel good factor. You don't have to be a "head" to consume those.

**GLB**  
2008-07-31  
15:40:05

I'm a 20 (21 in 11 days) year old college student about to start my senior year with a 3.6 gpa and Ive already been accepted to the law school of my choice and I smoke weed...I love it and how it makes me think...I smoke a blunt and turn on cnn and msnbc and argue with my tv!!! Who the hell am I hurting? If I could buy a pack of joints for 5 bucks it would save me money and make more for the gov't!

**M1450**  
2008-07-31  
16:13:28

To Alex: you just sound angry and a bit ignorant to the realities of this. You have a right to have an opinion, but you are just offering one for the sake of being oppositional. I am clear that we will not change your mind (and if we do, you clearly wouldn't admit it).

To EVERYONE ELSE: be encouraged, marijuana is damn-near legal in california, and 11 other states already allow it to be distributed under regulation...in Ney York, you can have over an ounce of weed on you without any prosecution!

...legalizations OBVIOUSLY near!

**Sam Sharp**  
2008-07-31  
16:32:46

Alex, you're not playing with a full deck.

**Willie**  
2008-07-31  
16:32:55

Funny, I thought Montel would be out trying to talk more about implants and peroxide blondes! M1450, if someone is not for drug use, legal, or not, does not make them bitter, keep it real or slow the roll with the weed, not every one needs to relax, feel good or get high with chemicals, even weed, booze or anything else. The whole world does not need it nor use it, and, most are not 'angry' nor as ignorant as you are for assuming that its good for all peeps, get your freak on how you want, but, don't think eveyone else needs 'help' in doing so. Your rants are showing one of the side effects, LOL!

**Alex**  
2008-07-31  
16:37:55

Boy, all these posts for me, how special, which, I find hilarious, shows, too much weed does make you people nuts and unemployed since, you seem to think one person opinion on a blog is one that matters with your ILLEGAL, and, right now, like it or not it is ILLEGAL drug use. Keep on toking, it will never make it past the people who count, the Supreme Court. Now, grab your bong and go for it, get back to me when you make sense with your hazy at best comments. For a drug that is to make you mellow, the trip the posters here seem like one bad acid trip. I guess the posters here really do define the term, stone trip, and, bad one at that.

**Taliban spokesman**  
2008-07-31  
16:57:54

Americans,

You must continue your "war on drugs." Hashish is our primary source of funding in 2008. Without drug laws in the United States creating a gross imbalance between Afghanistan's hashish market and that of the United States, the Taliban will not be able to afford new rocket propelled grenades and AK-47s for our holy war. Our organization cannot thrive without being gifted hundreds of millions of dollars for plants that cost mere pennies to grow.

Sincerely yours,  
Taliban

**OckhamsFolly**  
2008-07-31  
17:03:00

Just thought I'd chip in, Alex- the Supreme Court has absolutely no power in legislative measures other than assessing whether a law is constitutional or not. The US Supreme Court has also already rendered a verdict on whether marijuana laws are constitutional, specifically, that it is not covered in the constitution and a purely legislative measure. They will have absolutely no bearing on the legalization of mj. And I do have to say, judging by I would call, say, your criminal lack of understanding of your country's legal system, I would conclude that you're a troll.

**M1450**  
2008-07-31  
17:28:29

Willie: Please don't put words in my mouth....I called Alex's comments "angry" because of their overall tone; that comment has nothing to do with him disagreeing with legalization...NOR did i say anything about "everyone" needing to "feel good or get high with chemicals, even weed, booze or anything else..." Those are your words--not mine.

Secondly, I called Alex's position "ignorant" based on him saying that marijuana is a "starter drug" and because of the ridiculous generalizations he put forth about all users of marijuana, i.e. "thugs," "unemployed," etc.

as for your comment about "side affects" of marijuana guiding my comments on this forum....You don't know me, or anything about me. SO either make a valid point about the issue at hand, or direct your unsolicited comments elsewhere :-)

**Suz**  
2008-07-31  
17:31:17

Two snaps to OckhamsFolly for that flawless rebuttal!!!

**Michelle**  
2008-07-31  
17:34:09

I would love to give a comment about marijuana, I believe that it should be legalize because it's something that can be very relaxing and comfort for your soul and mind because, I know from experience because I sometimes suffer from depression and it would be nice to have something that come from earth.It's a "Herb" not a "Drug!"

**Legalize Marijuana**  
2008-07-31  
18:17:57

Alex you are a troll. You're assuming that everyone who wants legalization wants to consume marijuana. Well you're wrong. The prohibition does \*nothing\* to benefit the lives of non-users. It doesn't make them richer, it doesn't make them safer, it doesn't return to them anything of worth for all the billions they pour into it every year. They don't want your repugnant prohibition and neither do we!

**OckhamsFolly**  
2008-07-31  
18:42:36

Well, technically speaking, no, marijuana itself is not a drug, it is a plant. However, THC IS a drug, even if it is a fairly benign and naturally occurring drug. Caffeine and nicotine are also drugs found naturally occurring in plants. Being a drug, however, should have no bearing on it's legality. The number one reason why it should be legal is that the government should not have any say about what we decide to put in our own bodies. Behind that, we have all the problems that marijuana being illegal causes, specifically all the issues that are inherent in the black market. With the black market, we have increased violence due to drug running. We have environments in which drug pushers have easy access to people looking for marijuana, and can easily turn them onto another drug (half of the true cause of the "gateway drug" theory). We have a system with absolutely no standards of quality- sure, it's unlikely a bag of marijuana will be laced (it's far too expensive), but it's possible, and it's also possible that it can be cut with other substances that are cheaper to increase profit margins. We have the possibility of funds going to organized crime rackets. We also have issues due to the propagandist nature of prohibition. The government IS lying to the people about marijuana. Many teenagers discover this when they try it for themselves. After that, what is to cause them to believe that the government is telling the truth about other drugs? This is another factor in causing marijuana to be seen as a "gateway drug." Prohibition causes other issues on the government side of things, namely the misuse of billions of the tax payers dollars. It's true that relatively few people get jail time these days due to simple marijuana possession, but even arresting, processing, and sentencing those people cost more than the government makes. Additionally, the money spent on pursuing higher ups in the black market marijuana business is wholly unnecessary. With legalization and production and distribution licensing similar to tobacco, growers' markets would dry up (they could never match the bottom line of large scale producers, so they couldn't charge as little), and the marijuana black market would collapse- there'd be no reason for it to exist. All the money being spent on marijuana law enforcement today could be spent on increasing education funding, or medical funding, or some other worthy area, or even mean lower taxes. Another issue that has come up is Medical Marijuana. Medical Marijuana is recognized by almost ever major medical association in the country. The people with major mmj diseases such as multiple sclerosis, glaucoma, and cancer are not all simply lying so they can get high. It genuinely helps them. Yet federal drug laws are preventing those people from having the most efficacious treatment for their illnesses. Another excellent reason for legalization of marijuana is that marijuana prohibition also currently blocks industrial use of hemp. Hemp is an exceptionally versatile plant, which can be used for production of fabrics, fuel, foodstuffs,plastic, lotions, paper... it's an exceptionally useful product which could majorly help our economy. However, due to the fact that the major differences between high thc cannabis which is smokeable (for the sake of simplicity, marijuana) and low thc cannabis which isn't (hemp) is mostly how you grow it (genetics can obviously affect it, but even a high thc strain can be grown as hemp, and vice versa), industrial hemp simply isn't viable under federal law. As we wind through the arguments for marijuana legalization, we also have the arguments which are, in my opinion, among the weakest valid ones for marijuana legalization: why have marijuana illegal when alcohol and tobacco are legal? It is a fact that marijuana is indeed more benign; marijuana has never been reported to directly cause any death. Additionally, there is no documented case in which a person developed lung cancer due to smoking marijuana; and, in fact, it appears that among people who smoked both tobacco and marijuana, cancer rates are lower. Even with that concern, all of the carcinogenic properties of marijuana are caused by the inhalation of burnt matter, an unnecessary form of use. One could eat the marijuana or even vaporize it, which vaporizes only the THC and other cannabinoids if done properly. Marijuana is not physically addictive, and has no associated withdrawal symptoms. However, to me, this argument comes off as more of an argument for making alcohol and tobacco illegal than legalizing marijuana. So, while it's safety is certainly a mark in its favor, I would never make this the cornerstone argument in a debate about legalization. There are many reasons why marijuana should be legal. Even the initial report done by the National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse, commissioned by Nixon, found that marijuana prohibition was unwise. Efforts at national marijuana law reform is too long in coming. (Note- I apologize if the spaces between paragraphs are a bit too large... last time, I was sure I had a space in my post, but it's not

there, and the preview button doesn't seem to work, so I figured I'd better add an extra space, because this is far too large for one big wall of text)

**OckhamsFolly**  
2008-07-31  
18:49:35

I was afraid that would happen... why do carriage returns not create paragraph breaks? If anyone can tell me how, I'd be happy to go through and put them in, so an admin or something can delete that montrosity of a comment... no one should have to read something like that.

**tandy**  
2008-07-31  
21:44:12

OckhamsFolly: To create a paragraph place "  
" between the paragraphs...remove the "" though

**tandy**  
2008-07-31  
21:45:16

OckhamsFolly: To create a paragraph place < p > < P > remove the spaces between the arrows and the P

**mika**  
2008-08-01  
04:20:06

It's time for change. Marijuana is a plant.

**Anonymity**  
2008-08-01  
09:41:55

Well, being high is a necessary human experience since the beginning of time: hence a plant to help you do it grows naturally.

Now you can go to church if you want to go high but fact is everyone needs to get high sometime.

Being high all the time however is irresponsible. But it should not be illegal, if for instance being drunk all the time is not illegal, or being obese is not illegal. Any substance, including food, can be abused. Anyway im convinced this a debate question for people who can't do arithmetics.

**Richard Steeb**  
2008-08-01  
10:59:42

Cannabis prohibition is a crime against humanity. There will be no justice nor peace until it is available at the corner store for any adult eligible to purchase whiskey or cigars there. Alex, the atrocity is doomed. It shall not stand.

**Pete**  
2008-08-01  
14:59:55

Alex, you're getting all the attention because you're the only poster so far that seems to be against it and you seem to be enjoying your trolling. You're clearly ignorant about marijuana as many posters have already shown. If you had an educated argument, you might be able to convince someone, but your arguments are based entirely on ignorance. Marijuana is a drug, let's just leave it at that. What's so bad about it? Pot smokers are generally non-violent. How many guys come home, drink a 6-pack, and beat their wives or kids? Quite a few. On the other hand, you'll rarely find cases of guys coming home, smoking a joint, and beating their wives or kids. Pot doesn't make people violent. It makes a lot of people lazy and hungry, but not violent. Marijuana doesn't cause lung cancer like cigarettes. In fact, it appears that THC actually protects against lung cancer and cigarette smokers who smoke marijuana are less likely to develop lung cancer than cigarette smokers who don't. Recent studies also suggest THC may also help prevent Alzheimer's, making it the first drug that might actually prevent the disease from occurring at all. Add to this the other medical uses, and it appears to be quite a good drug. Here are some interesting statistic: # of deaths in the U.S. caused by cigarettes: 435,000 # of deaths in the U.S. caused by alcohol: 85,000 # of deaths in the U.S. caused by marijuana: 0 (that's ZERO!) You can search the literature all you want, but nobody ever died from taking marijuana. More people die from taking aspirin (~7,600/year) Really, the argument comes down to this: Does it make sense for alcohol to be legal while marijuana is illegal? The answer seems to be pretty obvious, no! So, the two options are either legalize marijuana, or criminalize alcohol. The latter has been tried and it failed, just as the current drug war has failed again, and again, and again. So really, the main thing that needs to be done is to educate the Alexes of the world.

**Alex**  
2008-08-02  
11:45:37

Troll or not, its too funny how weed heads here are trying to be rational about using and illegal drug. Save the logic for the crack pipe and bong since you are druggies without a clue, the whole world does not take and get high. No time in reading the rants of drug addicts.

**Why not?**  
2008-08-02  
11:53:20

I don't understand why this issue is still even an issue. While not a smoker (of any kind) myself, I believe that alcohol and tobacco have caused far more deaths and problems than marijuana. The amount of money spent trying to "catch" the users is ridiculous and our scant prison space should be used for serious criminals. There has NEVER been scientific support for the idea that use of pot leads to the use of "Harder" drugs. I believe in the legalization of ALL drugs (and their taxation). This will help pay for the programs for addicts that tax payors are already paying for, allow clean needles (reducing the amount of HIV/Hepatitis cases which the tax payer support via the Medicaid/Medicare programs)and let our law enforcement agents focus on the murders/sex offenders. We aren't allowed to smoke or drink at work, so why would it be any different for other chemical substances? The

government needs to stay out of our personal lives. They make us pay taxes to take care of those who have these addictions, but won't let us legalize the drugs to help make up the revenue to pay for it. It just doesn't make sense!

**Pete**  
2008-08-02  
12:36:39

Alex, I'm a pothead. I readily admit it. I smoke weed quite a bit, and I love it. I also manage to operate a software company (it and I pay our taxes), go to school part-time pursuing 2 degrees (3.9 GPA. Was 4.0, but blew an exam last semester), and volunteer in a lab part-time doing research in cancer drug treatments. In my past, I've been a columnist for a computer magazine, written tons of articles, and I've had a programming book published. Clearly I should be thrown in jail as I'm a menace to society. Other than trolling, what's your contribution to society.

**InsanityRules**  
2008-08-02  
14:21:24

C'mon folks, give Alex a break, and some credit for his brilliant and irrefutable logic: "Because the government says so"! It's too bad the Soviet Union collapsed; it seems Alex would be much more at home in the land of infallible government - where merely questioning their infallibility could get you 25 years in a work camp.

In what vision of a free country do we imprison responsible citizens because they enjoy the flower of a plant or the extract of a grape? We tried banning the grape years ago and what happened? Mass incarceration, criminalization of ordinary citizens, organized crime, violent battles for control of a lucrative black market, violation of individual rights and and loss of respect for law enforcement. Does any of that sound familiar?

Does Santayana ring true, Alex? Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

**LL**  
2008-08-02  
18:32:31

I am surprised and glad that so many of the commenters here are talking about systemic change. Prohibition didn't work.

**Thanks Alex!!!**  
2008-08-03  
15:16:30

Thanks ALEX!!!!

Your ignorant responses really motivated the commenters to post some excellent points that support legalization of MJ. While they were arguing with you I was being educated me about all of this...

Its sad that you weren't able to benefit from the knowledge being communicated.... but not all was lost; some of us are walking away a bit more educated about this!

They may not have changed your mind (nor did I expect them to), but I am SOLD...LEGALIZE IT!

**saintrage**  
2008-08-03  
20:34:07

Guns and tanks and riot gas can't stop you from smoking grass Listen to me people and I'll tell you true marijuana is good for you (lyrics from White Witch's song "It's So Nice To Be Stoned" circa mid 70's)

**the mannsville mafia**  
2008-08-04  
20:21:21

on behalf of the mannsville mafia, norml is the finest political group in existance. why is marijuana illegal when alcohol impairs your ability to function as a human being when cannibis sativa does not. please tell me.

**saintrage**  
2008-08-05  
01:05:50

the mannsville mafia has it right. I have seen alcohol ruin many bright lives all by itself. In all of the years I have been on this planet, the only way that I have seen Mary Jane ruin lives is with the penalties imposed on smokers.

**phillip**  
2008-08-11  
18:57:46

I think that we need better spokesman to voice the opinions of the people. Someone needs to take stand, get on the news, be heard and I am so glad that congress (as far as I can tell) is taking this debate seriously. Marijuana is not harmful; its impairment is notable but not as strong as alcohol which takes countless lives on our streets, in our homes and through out every day life (approximately half a millions life American life's are taken each year due to alcohol alone). I cant see how marijuana can be be criticised as dangerous and harmful if there are no know cancer patients, no addicting qualities and no illness derived from it such as alcoholism. I just recently found out that there was debates on the legalisation of marijuana and am totally in favor for medical and recreational. Hundreds of billions of tax payers dollars go towards a cause that isn't harming anyone but the tax payers. Also an enormous profit could benefit our slowly declining economy. I think that congress has spent billions of dollars trying to stop something that most non-user don't care if there next door neighbor does it. I mean would you care if your next door neighbor was drunk; well maybe cause it can cause anger, violent behavior and other non wanted actions. In retrospect, I think as Americans we should voice our opinions and legalize marijuana. Not only is there medical treatments for depression, chronic illnesses and pain, it is a safe recreational drug that I would consider much more safe that alcohol or tobacco which kill almost a total of 500,000 Americans a year. How can congress not pass a bill to generate revenue, stop crime (and free up police ofc. for violent crimes) and please the one third of Americans that

agree with its legalisation.

**sweetheart**  
2008-08-11  
23:26:12

I just wanted to say to everyone talking with Alex that dont worry about him keep making the points you have but Alex tries to make himself look better by calling the people for marijuana names, thinking thats going to get to them. When really he looks like a fat nerd that just never fit in to understand. He should know that people out there have there 'ways' to deal with there everyday lives and well, you have seen how he is acting he must not understand he needs to light one up so he can chill out. Anyway I say that it should be legalized because its no worse than the legal substances out there alcohol, cigs, and all the other, plus they say Government cares about money so why aren't they doing the smart thing? TAX it and Alex dont worry you have nothing worth stealing haha and no they dont steal.... okay so quit with the stupid sterotype that has nothing to do with MARIJUANA

**Sliv**  
2008-08-15  
20:41:07

Dearest Alex, IMHO, you are just a simple-minded hater. A dime-a-dozen internet troll. You appear to be incapable of having an open and honest debate about cannabis, it's effects on human physiology and on society at large. Facts and objective appear to elude you, Alex. Or is it that you are simply afraid... afraid that you DONT have a cohesive or persuasive argument? So all you can do is resort to chiding and name-calling, simply because the overwhelming majority of people here disagree with you, while providing you with verifiable facts? So, that's all you have? Perhaps, just maybe, you even realize, somewhere deep down, that you are on the WRONG side of the debate, but cannot bring yourself to admit it. Hmph. So, all you have is your destructive rhetoric, which so much worse than anything you decry here. Not too impressive, Alex. Did you know that until 1967, interracial marriage was also illegal in this country? As in AGAINST THE LAW? So, exactly how do you think immoral laws are changed, Alex? Maybe this is a bad example to use... are you a racist too? Do you hate me because I'm a white man married to a black woman? Or just because I smoke some pot to relax in the evenings? Nowadays, most rational, balanced people realize that the way white people (and many black people too) perceived this taboo back then was ridiculous, petty, and destructive. It did not promote peace, equality or prosperity to this country. Always, there were (and are) the "haters" and the "racists" out there, spewing forth their bile, quick to name-call, threaten and berate those who didn't agree with their venom. Bless those brave souls, strong of spirit and conviction, those people who followed their HEARTS, not a wrongful law. THEY were not afraid to stand up against the likes of you, or an immoral law or government. THEY defied it, THEY fought against it, and guess what Alex? THEY won the day! Just as WE will eventually prevail against the immoral Drug War. Because WE are in the right. Truth always prevails, Alex. You can hate me because I married a beautiful black woman, if that suits you. You can hate me simply because I smoke pot, too. I guess you could hate me because I also like to drink Starbucks coffee or because I like speed on the highway. Whatever. The reality is, I could care less what you think of me, because I am too busy enjoying my life. I can only feel deeply sorry for you, because you are such a small person. Those with a good heart and love for their fellow man would never convey the kind of bile you spew forth. You obviously have a troubled, hate-filled spirit. Continue to try to infect others here with your filthy attitude and name-calling... in the end, you will lose the argument, because your words are an obvious lie. Truth will indeed prevail, and the good people of this country will eventually come to realize that this War on Drugs is wrong, it is immoral, and they will demand and receive change! Just as they did with another immoral law, Prohibition. Maybe you heard of that one Alex? Do you drink Alex? Are you a stinking drunkard alcoholic? Do you beat your wife (or your boyfriend, if that's your inclination) when you drink, Alex? Hmm... maybe you don't like being typecast either, do you Alex? I have no doubt, WE will win this fight. WE will empty the corporate "for-profit" prisons, freeing those people who have been wrongly incarcerated. WE will expunge their records of any wrongful felonies, so that they can find a good job, get a student loan to get an education, or qualify for assisted housing again. WE will end the reign of terror on those that are economically challenged, and put an end to racially-biased prosecutions. WE will put an end to the viscious drug cartels bt taking away their profits. WE will put an end to para-military style break-ins of homeowners by police, simply for possessing an herb placed on Earth by the Creator. And most importantly, WE will put the DEA out of business, and place their sorry butts right into the unemployment line! I hope you are around to see it happen, Alex. It will be a beautiful thing to behold. Meanwhile, I suggest that you ease up, smoke a bowl and chill out, bro. Life's too short to hate.

**blueCash**  
2008-08-24  
20:50:26

Why you guys still debating about legalizing cannabis,when everybody whos a somebody is already doing it,just becoz people is involved in government dnt blaze it doesn mean we shouldnt nd besides its not like when i smoke somebody else gets high, i mean come on, i say lets all blaze if we wish. alcohol is legalised even though its da main cause of road accidents on our streets everyday, lets be honest have you ever heard of an accident caused by someone high on weed? i dnt think so! jst like they say,dnt drink and drive,smoke n fly baby.blaze on

**Rich**  
2008-08-26  
23:53:38

Most pot is not just a leaf anymore it is usually laced with other things. Cocaine is from a plant should we legalize that again. THINK NOT. Learn how to relax naturally with clean living and spiritual guidance not drugs. I been around alot of pothead and they all acted like morons on pot.

**gancheff0108**  
2008-09-01  
16:45:13

Alex - take off your jack boot Nazi uniform and face the facts - you are outnumbered! "Alex uber ales" wont work and your ignorant and self serving replies only make those who do not smoke pot - yet agree with legalization join the throng of opposition to penalties for pot use.

Take off your SS hat Alex - U must B wearing black wing tips, bermuda shorts, and sock garters while you try and make a case for the losing proposition of maintaining pot as illegal. Writh and squirm all U want Alex - but I'd bet a BUNDLE you yourself have no degree, job, or respect from very many people.

**Riggs777**  
2008-09-04  
23:56:54

Heh, Alex hey man you aren't the only one thats stepped on their pedestel and shouted anti-weed. But first off, if you never tried it you don't know what you're talking about. I also was a prolific anti-weed guy, straight as an arrow till my mid 20s and I got to know a really interesting, intelligent, beautiful girl for a long time who used weed - she was highly successful, funny and I was attracted to all those qualities. So I decided to try it and its not the horrible myth that society and the government's made it out to be. And as you can see, well you are being basically out-argued by lawyers, doctors and other high-class professionals here... and let me say this. Liquor sucks. I've done my drinking, it tastes like ass, it makes me feel like crap in the morning; and for most people it turns people into violent little children with no control over themselves at all; or it promotes extremely unnecessary procreation!! Weed does not cause people to try other drugs - its still a person's CHOICE.

**RAS Mafled**  
2008-09-08  
06:51:04

Peter Tosh- "legalise marijuana"- yeah more fire upon dem people who bann our herb- this herb of ours is innocent and it is not man-made it is so pure and natural- more thanks to u people of America for standing up agains this evil ruling which was in fact influenced by some ideologies during times of unrest in our world. here in my country of South Africa the herb is illegal and when dem people smoke dey hide- but we r having a problem of dem people mixing a natural herb(marijuana) with man made drugs(nicotine and ciggarettes)- this two does not mix and immediately one mix dem that is something else and not know whether is a herb of what?? but Inl think dat marijuana is an international herb and is not ony for Rasta people but almost anyone who need its service. here in South Africa i heard dem people saying Police will not arrest devoted Rastafarians who utalise the herb during thier church services- MArijjuana is a global herb and it is for anyone and it got no harm. it is pure and innocent- what we must do is to give thanks and praises the the Most High Jahrastafari for such a helpful herb, instead of criticising and banning it for no good reason. More fire upon dem people who are anti-nature. RAs Mafled(www.mafled.blogspot.com) from University of Limpopo(Turloop Campus)

**Dewy Zeppelinfan**  
2008-09-24  
17:50:11

All of you are so in tune to Alex's comments that most if not all completely missed the comment posted by the Taliban spokesman. I am as Red White and Blue as any American but The man is correct. Just as prohibition, Keeping it ilegal creates a Black market that funds the true Great Satan!! We can make any consumer product , and there are many websites that prove this, with Canibis that we make with Foriegn Oil and we could do it much quicker than waiting for off shore drilling. Making Canibis legal would also Employ many americans and help our economy so we can afford to pay our troops what they deserve so they could allow our bombs to take out the poppie fields Binladin is hiding in. I wish I could smoke some Has, however untill we enforce our right to be free and let the Middle East live the way they want to, I will never spend a penny on anything that funds such an abomination of such a pure religion such as the Taliban. As for Alex Maybe if Mr. Taliban would " puff Puff and pass " your way your Blood pressure wouldn't be so high!

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