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Legalizing marijuana is not all smoke and mirrors

Equinox Editorial

By

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After audacious ideas including marijuana affecting the sexual nature of women and the drug inspiring axe murderers scared Congress, The Marijuana Tax Act of 1937 was passed, making pot illegal. Since that paranoia glued itself onto politicians and lawmakers, marijuana has been both the butt of jokes and a serious consideration for medical assistance. For two weeks and counting, dozens of protestors have planted signs and their passion for legalizing marijuana in Keene's Central Square, despite the national restriction on the substance.

Whether these activists are considered anarchists or humble preachers is beside the point. Outcries such as these break the suture holding the sides of marijuana support and opposition together. In one corner are the supporters of imminent decriminalization. On the other side of the ring, the advocates of abiding by current regulations.

Those rooting for weed to be kept behind lock and key won't deny it hinders the mobility of the user. Drunk driving is enough of an issue, but being behind the wheel of a car while high is potentially dangerous and even harder to detect than alcohol intoxication. There is also the possibility that dope could be used as a stepping stone drug to much more lethal substances. The happy grass may not kill you, but cocaine, heroine and ecstasy could. Widespread distribution could also put the narcotic in the hands of small children with greater ease, whose bodies might respond more negatively to the effects including possible stunting of brain development.

In today's world, it seems more and more people are rooting for pot to be as readily available as a six-pack of Coors Light. According to Procon.org, a non-profit public charity Web site that compares topics ranging from milk to the death penalty, marijuana is in no way a detriment to one's health. Lester Grinspoon, MD, a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and author of "Puffing Is The Best Medicine," is quoted as saying, "I suspect that a day's breathing in any city with poor air quality poses more of a threat than inhaling a day's dose of marijuana."

Were marijuana legalized, police would have a transition in enforcement and those suffering from certain illnesses could easily be relieved. However, there are also possibilities of an overall increase in drug users as well as proceeding demonstrations to legalize more dangerous narcotics. As onlookers see the protests, the question becomes one of personal morals and communal accord. You choose.

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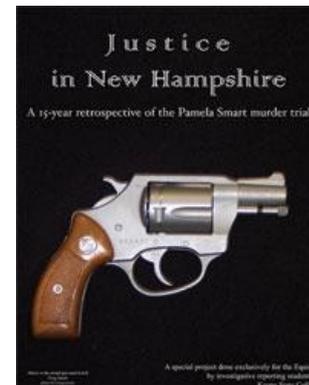
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