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HEADLINE: Legalize marijuana? No way

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BODY:

Recently, there has been a flurry of articles regarding the legalization of illicit drugs, especially regarding marijuana. This no doubt coincides with the current views accepted by most of the college population. The problem I have with these groups is that most of the arguments they use in regard to marijuana legalization are trivial and hold no credibility whatsoever, but end up commanding so much respect among so many people. The fact is that many of these people get their information from popular misconceptions and hearsay. Most people don't even know that out of the three basic classifications of drugs (i.e. stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens) that marijuana is a hallucinogen.

Among some of the popular arguments from proponents of legalization is the relation to alcohol and how alcohol is a bigger problem than marijuana. Now, I agree that there is a problem with alcohol in this country, but what does that have to do with the question at hand? Absolutely nothing. When asked about this relation, Dr. Franz Winkler stated, "An illness does not become more attractive by a statement that another one is just as bad." This comparison used by advocates of legalization is comparable to telling a terminally ill cancer patient that AIDS is just as bad. Do you think that makes them feel any more comfortable with what they have?

Now, I'm a fair person and I feel that this comparison between marijuana and alcohol should be discussed in order to clarify why the two drugs cannot be compared. By comparing the two of these drugs you are literally comparing apples to oranges. First, if you examine the metabolism rates of each of the drugs you will find a profound difference. By metabolism rate I mean the time it takes for the body to get rid of the drug. The human body can rid itself of alcohol at the rate of 0.015 percent an hour. That means that if you have a blood alcohol level of 0.06, which is still under the legal limit, it will take you four hours to get rid of all the alcohol. Marijuana, on the other hand, can be detected within the body forty-five days after use and can be found in brain tissue up to six months after use. Another criterion that must be looked at is the addiction rates of the two drugs. Contrary to popular belief, alcohol has a 10 percent addiction rate. Marijuana has an addiction rate of 26 percent. This means that two and half times more people become addicted to marijuana than alcohol.

There are some smaller points I would like to touch on regarding some of the arguments used by groups such as NORML. They state that if the drug was made legal the government could regulate its manufacture and distribution, thus rendering everything OK. The problem is that government regulation does not mean a whole hill of beans to anything. For example, alcohol is government regulated and this country has a big problem with that. I'm surprised that these activist groups do not agree with me on this. I mean weren't they the ones who first used the alcohol argument to justify legalization stating that it was a bigger problem than marijuana?

Marijuana is illegal for a reason. It was made illegal a long time ago because of persistent efforts from countries such as India and Egypt to do so because of the wide spread health and social problems this drug caused within their societies. It is illegal because it is addictive. It is illegal because of the physiological harm it causes to the body. Smoking one "joint" is equivalent to 20 tobacco cigarettes in damage to your lungs. It causes profound brain deformities after prolonged use. It depresses your body's ability to reject poisons, which becomes extremely dangerous when taken with large amounts of alcohol. It greatly impairs motor skills and dexterity. The drug increases your heart rate. It also causes dysfunction with your body's immune system. The list can go on and on.

Medical technology in the 70s could only detect marijuana in the body eight days after use. Today it can be found 45 days after use. Medical technology will only get better and more will be learned about this drug. Marijuana will never, ever be legal.

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