

I am writing today to show support for the legalization of marijuana in the State of North Dakota.

Marijuana, a drug with a vast amount of positive medicinal and psychological properties has, for far too long, been demonized by media, initially due to systemic racism throughout the country's history, and now a result of competition to big pharmaceutical corporations and Prison Industrial Complex. This demonization was, of course, also largely a result of law enforcement and media demagogues such as Harry Anslinger and William Randolph Hearst respectively.

This particular drug has virtually none of the harmful effects originally espoused against it. While it can be and is abused, the benefits far outweigh the costs for recreational users and even for abusers as well.

Scientific research regarding the drug has been historically stifled as a result, leading to further misconceptions and false beliefs.

The penalties for possession and use of the drug were originally abhorrent as many citizens were "made examples of," during the beginnings of the War On Drugs; receiving long and unnecessary prison sentences. Although decriminalization has allowed for this trend to slow, the Prison Industrial Complex, as well as localized governments and law enforcement departments have enjoyed the revenue these petty arrests and convictions have supplied over subsequent generations.

There exists an economy on both sides of the marijuana issue. Black markets thrive (Drug Dealers) and legitimate markets thrive (Prisons, Government, and Law Enforcement). The only loser in this system is the citizen that chooses to use a nearly harmless drug for a multitude of reasons. It is to their detriment that marijuana remain illegal whereby they are continually persecuted by governments and law enforcement while continuing to fuel a black market.

By legalizing marijuana, law enforcement agencies would be able to allocate their time and resources to more pressing matters of crime prevention. Local businesses would blossom, creating jobs and market revenue. Private citizens would be more "free," to use a virtually harmless substance at their behest which is far less harmful and addictive than the cigarettes and alcohol which are already legally allowed in our society.

It is then, in the best interest of the free market, law enforcement, and the marijuana using citizen, and would allow for a large percentage of the black market to dry up as well as decrease the burden of prison overpopulation.

Please legalize marijuana, for all of us.

Signed:

Publius,

Just Kidding,

Jeff Swenson, a North Dakota resident.