

# [Patients for Medical Cannabis](#)

- [Articles](#)
- [Legalize it](#)
- [Links](#)
- [Marijuana info](#)
- [Medical marijuana](#)
- [Movies, documentaries](#)

Sharing information about medicinal use & legalization of Cannabis (Marijuana) & Hemp

## **Marijuana Reconsidered – The Harvard Crimson**

**by editors**

Source: [The Harvard Crimson](#)



Imagine that scientists at a major drug company announced the discovery of a new drug, clinically proven to be effective in the treatment of symptoms of glaucoma, multiple sclerosis, AIDS and migraines, all with moderate short term side-effects and no long term ones. The drug has no potential for overdose and no risk of physical dependence. Now imagine that the United States government deemed this substance to be medically worthless, classified it with the most dangerous and addictive narcotics and, along with state and local governments, proceeded to spend over \$30 billion a year attempting to eradicate it.

Sound bizarre? It is, but it also happens to be U.S. policy on marijuana. Since the administration of President Richard Nixon, America has put billions upon billions of dollars into the War on Drugs, with the lion's share of funds allotted to fighting marijuana. There are over 20 federal agencies involved in combating cannabis and the combined cost to taxpayers is tremendous.

Yet there are few valid arguments as to why we should be involved in this fight; the justifications offered in support of marijuana prohibition crumble under scrutiny. Rhetoric has eclipsed logic, and the debate over the decriminalization of marijuana has devolved into a farce of political grandstanding and exploitation.

The Harvard Coalition for Drug Policy Reform is dedicated to reversing this trend by bringing logic and science to the forefront of federal drug policy. We believe that current discourse on the issue ignores the critical question of what is more harmful to society: marijuana or the battle to eradicate it. We also believe that an appeal to the facts answers this question conclusively.

In the words of the very commission convened by President Nixon to justify the prohibition of marijuana, “The drug’s relative potential for harm...and its actual impact on society does not justify a social policy designed to seek out and firmly punish those who use it.” This conclusion can be supported along several lines.

To begin with, marijuana has less potential for dependence and is less likely to induce withdrawal symptoms than alcohol, nicotine and even caffeine. It is considerably less harmful to the lungs than smoking cigarettes, not only because cigarette smokers tend to consume their product in much larger quantities, but also because cigarettes affect smaller airways in the lungs and thus do proportionately more damage. While there has not been a single death reported from cannabis, cigarettes kill 430,000 people annually.

With regard to its impact on the brain, the most pervasive myth about cannabis is that it permanently impairs memory and other cognitive functions. However, a 1999 study from Johns Hopkins University of 1,318 marijuana users over a 15-year period revealed no significant difference in cognitive decline between heavy users, light users and non-users. While marijuana users as a group scored more poorly than non-users on a battery of cognitive tests at the outset of another study, after 27 days of non-use the test scores of the two groups were indistinguishable. Granted, the ability to learn and recall new information is impaired while high, but the effects are neither long term nor irreversible. The myth that marijuana kills brain cells is as patently false as the claim that it induces violent or aggressive behavior.

The dangers of marijuana have been greatly exaggerated. These limited dangers must now be weighed against the social costs of its prohibition. The most damaging effect of marijuana prohibition is the denial of medicinal marijuana to those who need it. Marijuana dramatically reduces the severe nausea associated with cancer chemotherapy, relieves the unrelenting optic pressure that characterizes glaucoma and successfully induces appetite among AIDS patients who desperately need to eat. It has also proved effective in combating the symptoms of epilepsy, multiple sclerosis and many other medical conditions. Unbelievably, the U.S. government has ignored these findings and classified marijuana as a Schedule I Drug, effectively stating that it has no potential for medicinal use. This classification is especially unwarranted as marijuana’s toxicity is minimal, particularly when compared with other commonly prescribed pharmaceuticals.

The economic and social costs of prohibition are also staggering. The government spends over \$30 billion battling cannabis each year, yet despite this tremendous expenditure marijuana is as available as ever, with 89 percent of high school seniors reporting last year that it was fairly easy or very easy to obtain. It is not surprising then that 734,000 people were arrested on marijuana-related charges in 2000, 88 percent for simple possession. Such enforcement produces more harm than it prevents. It criminalizes large numbers of otherwise law-abiding people who have in no way impinged upon the liberties of others. Furthermore, it disproportionately affects America’s youth and minority communities, and the harm done to their futures far outweighs the harm of marijuana itself.

The government should base its policy on science and common sense. Marijuana must be decriminalized and made readily available for medicinal purposes.

Jared M. Fleisher '05 and Tobias G. Snyder '05 are officers of the The Harvard Coalition for Drug Policy Reform.



ADVERTISEMENT

Eco World Content From  
Across The Internet.



FEATURED ON ECOPRESSED

[Le Vélo Bambou? Le Wow!](#)

Facebook

Twitter

More

Like this:

Like

Be the first to like this post.

Published: [January 13, 2010](#)

Filed Under: [Harvard](#)

### 3 Responses to “Marijuana Reconsidered – The Harvard Crimson”

1. *Norman Lepoff, M.D.* says:

[January 13, 2010 at 7:39 pm](#)

This is an excellent article.

[Reply](#)

2. *Barb Rock* says:

[May 9, 2010 at 11:21 am](#)

Excellent Article written about the stupidity of the american people allowing us to WASTE so much money to fight something that you cannot get physically addicted to.....ie alcohol you are physically addicted and some have to go to clinics.....cigarettes.....patches,pills,clinics,hypnothis....Not for marajuana! Huh !

It is the stigma...that is all it is!!!...oh maybe also lots of people would loose their jobs like... DEA....local police...jailers.....clerks at courthouses.....oh wait.....WE AMERICANS PAY FOR THOSE TOO !

Stupid!

Barb

Tacoma, WA

[Reply](#)

3. *Miranda* says:

[September 13, 2010 at 10:02 pm](#)

It is a breath of fresh air seeing an article that is not contributing to the horrid reputation marijuana already has. It's madness that further testing and consideration will not be taken for medicinal purposes. If marijuana were to be legalized, the tax placed on it could very well assist in ending this terrible recession the United States is in. Maybe the people of this country aren't ready for this kind

of legalization, but that doesn't mean it shouldn't be looked into further.

[Reply](#)

## Leave a Reply

Enter your comment here...

Guest

Log In

Log In

Log In



Email

(Not published)

Name

Website

- Notify me of follow-up comments via email.
- Notify me of new posts via email.

Post Comment

[« Previous Post](#)  
[Next Post »](#)



"If (Marijuana) were unknown, and bio-prospectors were suddenly to find it in some remote mountain crevice, its discovery would no doubt be hailed as a medical breakthrough. Scientists would praise its potential for treating everything from pain to cancer and marvel at its rich pharmacopoeia; many of whose chemicals mimic vital molecules in the human body."

- *The Economist*, "Reefer Madness, Marijuana Is Medically Useful Whether Politicians Like It or Not," April

29, 2006.

## most viewed today

- [Marijuana vs cigarettes](#)
- [Marijuana cures cancer - US government has known since 1974](#)
- [Marijuana / Cannabis Use In Pregnancy - Dr. Melanie Dreher](#)
- [Marijuana tincture](#)
- [Topical Cannabis Healing Salve](#)
- [Jesus healed using cannabis, study shows](#)
- [Pregnancy and Medical Marijuana: Can Pot Help Pregnant Women With Vomiting and Nausea?](#)
- [Top Anti Drug Researcher Changes Mind, Says Legalize Marijuana](#)
- [Marijuana Tincture](#)
- [Marijuana during pregnancy](#)
- [Lester Grinspoon, M.D.](#)
- [Marijuana in the Bible](#)

## receive our posts via email

click to subscribe

Join 120 other followers

Sign me up!

## recent posts

- [Cannabis, without a doubt, cures cancer \(video\)](#)
- [Clearing the Smoke: The Science of Cannabis – Montana PBS](#)
- [Medical Marijuana: A Science-Free Zone At The White House](#)
- [Ending the drug war – Judge James Gray](#)
- [Marijuana Advocates Sue Feds After DEA Rejects Weed as Medicine](#)
- [White House admits marijuana has ‘some’ medical value](#)
- [Gary Johnson: Face reality, legalize pot – CNN](#)
- [The most retweeted question for Obama was about the legalization of marijuana – and he ignored us again.](#)
- [Top 10 reasons to legalize marijuana](#)
- [Obama Administration Goes Back On Medical Marijuana Pledge](#)
- [Ron Paul says legalize marijuana](#)
- [Dr Lester Grinspoon on medical marijuana](#)

Search

## Archives

Select Month



## Categories

Select Category

January 2010

S M T W T F S

1 [2](#)

3 [4](#) 5 6 [7](#) [8](#) 9

[10](#) [11](#) 12 [13](#) [14](#) [15](#) [16](#)

[17](#) 18 [19](#) [20](#) [21](#) 22 23

24 [25](#) [26](#) [27](#) [28](#) [29](#) [30](#)

[31](#)

[« Dec](#)

[Feb »](#)

### views

- 554,477

### [Twitter Updates](#)

- RT @ [hempoilcures](#): Legalize Marijuana, [#ThunderBay](#) Mayor Says <http://t.co/E9kObXbT> [#PrisonIndustrialComplex](#) [#CiaDrugCartel](#) [#EndTheFed](#) [#OW](#) ... [11 hours ago](#)
- RT @ [herbiv0re](#): FOX News has just published a smear story on [#OccupyWallStreet](#) based off a forum post. RT and spread: <http://t.co/86TVHkG> ... [18 hours ago](#)
- RT @ [yokoono](#): I love [#OccupyWallStreet](#) As John said, "One hero cannot do it. Each one of us have to be heroes." And you are. Thank you. 1 ... [3 days ago](#)
- RT @ [OccupationTV](#): LADY LIBERTY CRYES as @ [MikeBloomberg](#), @ [POTUS](#) and @ [NYCMayorsOffice](#) Silent. - [#globalrevolution](#) live on <http://t.co/7tmNRXRd> [3 days ago](#)
- RT @ [TheNewDeal](#): We Only Win By Defeating Violence with Peace, Hate with Love, & Ignorance with Facts. We Must Never Give Up. [#OccupyWall](#) ... [4 days ago](#)
- RT @ [MMFlint](#): Why [#OccupyWallStreet](#) ? George Carlin can explain: <http://t.co/YIEMHLF0> [4 days ago](#)
- RT @ [JAMyerson](#): And tomorrow morning, bright and early, tune into @ [msnbc](#) to catch me on my favorite new show, @ [upwithchris](#)! I'm talking # ... [4 days ago](#)
- RT @ [RebuildDream](#): RT @ [ravenb](#): Buy the [#occupywallstreet](#) folks pizza! I'll donate another dollar (up to 100) for each RT [go.gl.me/pC8rJi](http://go.gl.me/pC8rJi) [#p2](#) [4 days ago](#)
- RT @ [hempoilcures](#): 2-yr-old Uses Marijuana 2 Beat Brain Tumor <http://t.co/Y7fdWaJO> [#Health](#) [#Cancer](#) [#Occupy](#) [#OWS](#) [#FOX](#) [#MSN](#) [#CNN](#) [#NBC](#) [5 days ago](#)
- Four Americans Get Pot From US Government <http://t.co/yxEZc9bU> [6 days ago](#)

**Half of the war on drugs is a war on marijuana**



- [Marejoni](#) on [Cannabinoids – Every body likes them; some bodies need them](#)
- [Old Hippie](#) on [Cannabis, without a doubt, cures cancer \(video\)](#)
- [editors](#) on [Marijuana cures cancer – US government has known since 1974](#)
- [Jeruel Hernando](#) on [Marijuana cures cancer – US government has known since 1974](#)
- Anonymous on [Marijuana vs cigarettes](#)

[Blog at WordPress.com](#). Theme: [Manifest](#) by [Jim Barraud](#). [Fonts on this blog](#).

0

Follow