Marijuana – Why So Much Debate?

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What exactly is marijuana?

- Marijuana—also called weed, herb, pot, grass, bud, ganja, Mary Jane, and a vast number of other slang terms—is a greenish-gray mixture of the dried, shredded leaves and flowers of Cannabis sativa—the hemp plant.

- The main psychoactive (mind-altering) chemical in marijuana, responsible for most of the intoxicating effects sought by recreational users, is delta-9-tetrahydro-cannabinol (THC). The chemical is found in resin produced by the leaves and buds primarily of the female cannabis plant. The plant also contains more than 500 other chemicals, including over 100 compounds that are chemically related to THC, called cannabinoids.

- Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug in the United States.
Moral Issue vs. Policy Issue

**Moral Issue**
- Individually based
- Effective - based on personal level

**Policy Issue**
- Public Safety
- Public Health
- Society
Or is the question....

Medical Marijuana vs. Recreational Marijuana
Marijuana States (Medicinal)
23 states and Washington DC

- California - 1996
- Alaska - 1998
- Oregon - 1998
- Washington - 1998
- Maine - 1999
- Colorado - 2000
- Hawaii - 2000
- Nevada - 2000
- Montana - 2004
- Vermont - 2004
- Rhode Island - 2006
- New Mexico - 2007
- Michigan - 2008
- Arizona - 2010
- DC - 2010
- New Jersey - 2010
- Delaware - 2011
- Connecticut - 2012
- Massachusetts - 2012
- Illinois - 2013
- New Hampshire - 2013
- Maryland - 2014
- Minnesota - 2014
- New York - 2014
Recreational Marijuana States

- Colorado
- Washington
So if so many states are “legalizing” it, what’s wrong with Ohio?

- **National Organization to Reform Marijuana Laws (NORML)**
  - NORML’s mission is to move public opinion sufficiently to legalize the responsible use of marijuana by adults, and to serve as an advocate for consumers to assure they have access to high quality marijuana that is safe, convenient, and affordable.

- **ResponsibleOhio**
  - ResponsibleOhio is a Political Action Committee that seeks a Constitutional Amendment that will provide a highly regulated, fairly taxed and lab-tested marijuana marketplace in Ohio.
  - ResponsibleOhio is comprised of numerous businesswomen and men, medical professionals, and patient advocates who have come together to provide a responsible marijuana reform program for Ohio.
So how is ResponsibleOhio working?

- They have submitted an Initiative Petition to change the Ohio Revised Code to allow for Ohio to become both a medical and a recreational marijuana state.
- Their goal is to have this matter on the ballot in November 2015.
Just this week, ResponsibleOhio announced...

- To have 10 indoor growing facilities across the State of Ohio. 3 will be in Northeast Ohio - Lorain, Hudson, and Alliance. All facilities will be between 13-76 acres.

- They have 10 “primary investors” who would have “exclusive rights to oversee the growth, cultivation, and sale of marijuana for profit.”

- Of these 10, one is a retired NBA player, one is a retired NFL player, and one is a fashion designer.

- If the initiative passes, marijuana would be available to Ohioans over the age of 21, unless it’s for medical purposes, then anyone of any age can receive a prescription...from one of the states approved doctors.
The overall plan for Ohio as seen by ResponsibleOhio...

- Anyone over 21, who can pass a criminal background check, can own and operate a marijuana retail store. Over 1,100 licenses will be available.
  - Let’s take a second to talk about the struggles Washington is having with their licenses.

- A non-profit dispensary system will be setup to ensure patients can get medical marijuana at cost.
  - Who will oversee recreational marijuana?

- Because the supply is tightly regulated, the state can ensure consumers receive a tested product that is completely safe.
  - Really? Completely safe?

- Marijuana will be fairly taxed with a 15% flat tax, bringing more resources to our communities.
  - Who determines where the tax dollars will go?
Ohio Marijuana Marketing

God Approves

Safer than peanuts
It’s even safer than water!

Approximately 15 people die each year from water intoxication (drinking too much water). Safer than water.
BUT is history being repeated?

In the late 19th and early 20th century, tobacco marketers used these tactics.

- Natural - tobacco was a natural product. It was from the ground
- Medicinal - Health benefits of smoking included asthma, head colds, and all diseases of the throat
- Doctors use it. The product must be ok.
- No one has ever died from an overdose.
What exactly is medicine?

- No one chews willow bark for aspirin...
- Smoking opium is not used for pain relief...
- Compound in viper venom used for blood pressure...
Who is Impacted?

- Addiction Services - Maintain a healthy lifestyle (Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery)
- Colleges - Financial Aid and Retention
- Education - Student Testing Requirements
- Healthcare Professionals - Marijuana Safety and Efficacy
- Law Enforcement - Public Safety and Officer/Employee Issues
- Legislators - Budgets/Job and then “election-time” issues.
- Businesses - Bottom Line
  - Colorado - Brandon Coats sued Dish Network, court ruled it wasn’t an illegal firing because marijuana is federally illegal.
  - Average cost to employers - between $69,000 - $107,000 in costs, not including award.
Let me leave you with this…
Center for the Sick and Dying
Center for the Sick and Dying
Wyoming College Student

- Levy Thamba Pongi - Northwest College Student
- Ate one marijuana cookie - recommended serving seize was 1/6 of a cookie.
- Jumped out of window
- Autopsy - marijuana intoxication was “a significant contributing factor.”
Meet Kristine Kirk

- Husband ate a marijuana candy
- Started hallucinating
- Told wife to shoot him
- On the phone with 911, he shot and killed her.
Questions? Comments?