Illustrative Essay

Recreational Marijuana

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The legalization of recreational marijuana has always been a controversial topic, some people think it’s a harmless drug, some think that it’s medicinal and other people are completely against it. But in recent days a lot of states in the United States of America have legalized recreational marijuana or are in the process of legalization. In addition to states legalizing recreational marijuana territories are doing the same, for example the CNMI and Guam. The legalization of recreational marijuana can definitely impact the society in positive and negative ways, while being regulated.

Despite the controversy of legalizing recreational marijuana, you can't ignore the positive impact it has on the economy and society of states that have legalized marijuana. In 2016 Kang, O’Leary and Miller reported that the marijuana industry in Colorado is a multiple billion-dollar phenomenon and sales are expected to reach 22 billion in 2020. Marijuana is not only a new industry, but it also benefits major industries like agriculture, medicine, social work, psychology, government, tourism and hospitality. For example, the tourism and hospitality industry are definitely booming it was reported that 90% of marijuana sales in the city of Denver come from out-of-state visitors and taxes from those sales are up to $1Billion. And as years go on sales are projected to grow larger. With the high demand of marijuana many businesses have been created related to the marijuana industry. And this has created many jobs and now Colorado experienced its lowest unemployment rate, showing a strong indication of a healthy economy caused by the legalization of recreational marijuana.

 Although there are many positive impacts, there are also some negative affects it has. Kang et al. (2016) reported, “There are already a slew of negative consequences reported by law enforcement and residents, including an increase in marijuana-related emergency room visits among youth, more newborns with marijuana in their system, an increase of homeless people, a rise in drug-related school suspensions, more drug-related crimes, deterioration of poor communities used as marijuana growing fields, lawsuits from neighboring states, and so on.” In addition, arrest rates at the borders of Washington and Colorado two states that have legalized recreational marijuana has gone up. Due to the fact of people attempting to smuggle marijuana to neighboring states (Hao and Cowan, 2017).

Regulations differ in each state, but they all have the same purpose which is to make sure the use of marijuana recreationally isn't abused. In the CNMI anyone over the age of twenty one years old can possess only one ounce of marijuana in a public place, eight ounces of usable marijuana in a household, sixteen ounces of solid marijuana products, five grams of marijuana extracts and no more than twelve immature marijuana plants (Taulamwarr Sensible CNMI Cannabis Act of 2018). The consequences if you do not follow the regulations or the law includes imprisonment of five years or less, or fines than can go up to 5,000 dollars (Taulamwarr Sensible CNMI Cannabis Act of 2018). The state of Colorado set up their Marijuana Enforcement division while also having these regulations: Colorado residents 21 or older can purchase up to an ounce of marijuana per visit to a dispensary while out state visitors can purchase a quarter ounce of marijuana per visit (Kang et al.,2016).

In conclusion, the legalization of recreational marijuana can impact the society in positive and negative ways, while being regulated. The state of Colorado’s economy is picking up thanks to the legalization of marijuana it is bringing in more tourist and creating more jobs. But with the legalization of recreational marijuana there of course comes some downfall like marijuana related injuries increase, drug related school suspension and drug related crime. With the legalization of marijuana, there are rules and regulations visitors and residents must abide by if not they face the consequences. I think legalizing marijuana here in the CNMI was a right thing to do for us. This gives the CNMI the opportunity to pick up the economy. We should definitely look at other state’s regulations and identify some flaws, so we do not create the same mistakes.

Reference

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