

Fellow students, primarily sponsored by junior, Clayton Schleg, would like to spread awareness of state and federal government action on policies regarding the genus of plants known as Cannabis, better known as hemp and marijuana. Washington state has a relatively long history with instating legislation regarding Cannabis, from its medical marijuana laws that were approved by voters in 1998 to the recent passage and gradual implementation of Washington State Initiative-502, legalizing small amounts of Cannabis for recreational use for persons 21 and older.

Industrial hemp's purposes range from extracting the seeds, fibers and cellulose contained in the plant to produce food, textiles, and construction materials. In 2013, a bipartisan group of senators introduced language into a farm bill that passed in the U.S. Congress in February of 2014, which will allow states to grow industrial hemp for research. With the implementation of legal hemp cultivation in Colorado through Amendment 64, and the vocal support on both the federal level and within different states, most notably Kentucky, has shown the country's desire to take industrial hemp off of the Controlled Substances Act. Alongside that, a survey from YouGov conducted in 2013 showed that 56% of its sample supported the growing of hemp.

As of October 2013, Gallup found 58% of Americans the legalization of marijuana. Despite the legality for adults 21 and older in Washington state to use recreational marijuana, usage on federal lands, including public universities, still carry severe penalties, including fines, incarceration, and loss of financial aid. Several studies have confirmed that people of color are incarcerated at a higher rate than white people, despite similar rates of usage. Harvard University professor Jeffrey A. Miron and late Nobel laureate Milton Friedman as well as other notable economists have linked the violence of drug cartels in Mexico and the U.S. to the black market resulting from the illegality of certain drugs, including marijuana.

Within the context of protecting fellow students from unjust federal laws and in support of human rights, Schleg and his fellow students would like to show student support for the sustainable farming, production, processing, and sale of Cannabis, as well as goods made from Cannabis, for both personal and industrial use, alongside unbiased and science-based health education concerning marijuana at the school through a declarative statement on behalf of the WWU Associated Students.

Shall the Associated Students of Western Washington University urge the AS Board of Directors to incorporate health education of marijuana through the use of unbiased and science-based data, support policies and legislation for sustainable farming, production, processing, and sale of the Cannabis plant, as well as goods made from Cannabis, for both personal and industrial use into their state and federal legislative agendas?

Here are some studies and articles for more context.

Race:

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/11/opinion/11blow.html?_r=2&ref=opinion?src=ISMR_API_LST_FB

<https://www.aclu.org/billions-dollars-wasted-racially-biased-arrests>

<http://www.drugpolicy.org/resource/240000-marijuana-arrests-costs-consequences-and-racial-disparities-possession-arrests-washi>

<http://archpsyc.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1107330>

Black market violence:

<http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/03/24/miron.legalization.drugs/index.html>

<http://blog.chron.com/bakerblog/2014/01/will-recreational-marijuana-sales-in-colorado-hurt-mexican-cartels/>

Health:

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140673604162004>

While a bit outdated, this does a good job of summing up penalties for students charged with possession:

<http://www.wvu.edu/pws/pdfs/DrugConvictions.pdf>

Hemp:

<http://healthimpactnews.com/2014/2014-farm-bill-the-legalization-of-hemp/>

<http://massieforms.house.gov/news/email/show.aspx?ID=GVI57CLT3X4L6VIZWPXQ3PXVMA>

http://big.assets.huffingtonpost.com/toplines_hemp_0522232013.pdf

Other:

<http://www.prohibitioncosts.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/MironReport.pdf>

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2010/05/13/ap-impact-years-trillion-war-drugs-failed-meet-goals/>

Percentage of national supporters of marijuana legalization:

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/165539/first-time-americans-favor-legalizing-marijuana.aspx>

While according to the school (from flyers that were put up not too long ago), only about 10% of students use marijuana on a regular basis. I was not able to find this on the school website, and numbers are missing for about how many have ever used it in their lives.