

## **Marijuana and (Supervised Underage) Alcohol Legality Reflection**

Should marijuana be legal?

This is the debate that I observed. It was a very intense debate, with very valid and passionate arguments. The first arguments to go around were the pro-choice argument for pro-marijuana and the health risks for the anti-marijuana side. These continued for a while, and we learned some new statistics and facts regarding the use of marijuana: such as the facts that 40% of Americans admitted to (this statistic is probably higher including those who did not admit) having used marijuana and that marijuana makes the person 85% more injury prone. However, there was not too much new learning in these statistics, as these are already the major ideas that have already been taught to us in Wellness class. However, there were a few ideas that struck me, being creative and taking me by surprise.

On the side supporting legalizing marijuana, Monica said that legalizing marijuana would have a major positive impact on our economy, something I never would have thought of. I thought that marijuana, causing a dullness in mind, would lead to people performing worse in jobs and slightly lowering the economy. However, she said that if marijuana was legalized, there would be a huge new market similar to that of alcohol and tobacco, and perhaps even more popular and profitable (temporarily) because of its “new” and “cool” factor. It would become a new product, something that could be bought and sold. A new industry of marijuana-growing and refining could arise, along with many jobs, and domestic and international sales could benefit the U.S. by providing yet another industry. She also mentioned that this would eliminate the cost and responsibility of persecuting and imprisoning marijuana users.

Another interesting argument supporting marijuana was presented by Stephan: he said that there was no such thing as a “marijuana overdose,” such as there is with alcohol and tobacco. There have been no deaths associated with overusing or binging on marijuana, while even those two *legal* drugs can cause a quick death with overuse, even from the *first* use. This would make marijuana “safer” for impulsive teens who might not know their limits.

The last major point that struck me was on the side against marijuana use. Owen and Alex presented the argument that many people arrested for driving under the influence (DUI) in Michigan and Colorado (where it is legal) were marijuana users. They explained how marijuana

could indeed cause some of the same disastrous effects associated with alcohol and tobacco, such as car accidents. In other words, marijuana is just as dangerous as legal drugs in many ways.

Although the science behind it is very compelling, and despite my personal bias against drug use, the first two major arguments made the pro-marijuana use a winner in this debate.

### Should underage drinking under parent supervision be legal?

Our assigned side to research was against the legalization of underage drinking in the supervision of an adult. Our debate was similar to the one about marijuana, but I feel that it was a little more repetitive and didn't have as much intensity and creative thought.

I presented the opening and closing statements, both of which emphasized the proven health risks of alcohol, as well as the fact that so many young people have used alcohol and ruined their lives in so many ways. With our share of science, we debated that alcohol is harmful, whether or not it is under parent supervision; even that tiny amount can potentially damage you. Also, there are horrifying alcohol stories — even if it just starts with “responsible” drinking

We also kept on hammering in the idea that everyone is unique: and when that comes to alcohol, it may have drastic consequences. If the parent was poorly educated or an alcoholic, then the student will have a poor idea of “responsible” drinking. On the other hand, even if the parent was educated, the child may deceive the parent into thinking that they are responsible from these supervised experimentations, and still go out and overdo binge drinking. The reality is, parents cannot truly supervise their kid at all times, and when the child goes out to party thinking that alcohol is okay, they might push their limits and still binge drink despite supervised drinking. Lastly, the child may have different alcohol tolerances, which can make a difference.

On the contrary, the pro-alcohol side kept on describing the benefits that it could have to “protect” the child: if the child is “educated in drinking,” then they would have a lesser chance of overdose, a lesser chance of binge drinking, and a better idea of their limits. But again, to our point, this would only work if the kid is a very disciplined child; and, with the factors of peer pressure and the effects of drugs on the brain, education may be ditched during a party.

In this debate, I feel that our argument against underage use was stronger: the opposing side could not defend against the many “what-ifs” — the uncontrollable and unsupervisable aspects — of alcohol. I think we provided compelling arguments against using for young people.