

High Society: The Cannabis Chronicles, Episode 1

Over the past two years, I have had the pleasure of interacting with a variety of individuals who share the common goal of ending marijuana prohibition. Do not be mistaken, however, as even though these individuals find themselves on similar crusades, their definitions of victory differ. These differences can be categorized into four basic categories:

1. Those opposed to legalization for fear that it will tear apart the very foundation of human society and destroy the world as we know it. These people cling to archaic beliefs founded on lies and propaganda like bees to honey, refusing to acknowledge the ways modern medicine, science or history pertain to the cannabis discussion. Though their arguments are circumstantial, they often carry the most weight because these individuals tend to be in the wealthiest sectors of society and/or hold power in the political arena.
2. Those who champion the cause of cannabis for medicinal use. These individuals seek legalization based on the medicinal benefits of the cannabis plant and work toward providing a legal platform for patients to seek a safer, natural, more effective alternative to modern medicine. This faction of the marijuana movement is focused on saving lives and bringing legitimacy to the claims that cannabis is a miracle drug. These crusaders tend to reject any form of regulation and taxation, which threatens to create higher priced medicine and major competition from a recreational market.
3. Those who favor taxation and regulation, who make up the largest growing segment of the marijuana movement. These supporters see the massive potential to generate jobs and revenue through a legalized recreational platform that can be taxed and regulated at the state and federal level. They tend to focus on the preservation of individual freedoms and liberties, as well as favoring a strong economy. The major concern for this type of cannabis reformer lies in the fear that heavy taxation and costs of doing business will drive potential customers to the pre-existing black market rather than entice black market distributors to become part of the proposed legal market.
4. The final type of cannabis supporter favors a less controversial approach to the reform movement. These individuals seek to rebuild the historic hemp industry, which was a staple in this country's founding. By generating a cannabis crop with no psychoactive compounds, multiple industrial applications, and a relatively low ecological impact, these crusaders hope to re-establish America's place in the global market as a source of production, rather than remain the consumers we've become. The fact that millions of US dollars are spent each year importing the hemp products that Americans seek to produce should be an embarrassment to our government leaders.

The secret to a successful cannabis reform movement will be in assuaging the concerns and satisfying the desires held by these four groups. It's a relatively easy task if you observe the discussion as an unbiased civilian, yet for some reason politicians have been unable or unwilling to accomplish it over the past 77 years. But have no fear, as my exposure to such a diverse group of people has allowed me to contemplate this topic from a completely objective point of view. Through this point of view I have devised a common sense approach that considers the various agendas and concerns of all four factions within and opposed to the movement.

These “chronicles” will recount the story of this plan and the journey that we must take to make this plan a reality.

(to be continued)