

Myth #4: Decriminalizing marijuana would lead to an increase in crime.

Fact: When examining the relationship between marijuana use and violent crime, President Nixon's National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse concluded: "Rather than inducing violent or aggressive behavior through its purported effects of lowering inhibitions, weakening impulse control and heightening aggressive tendencies, marijuana was usually found to inhibit the expression of aggressive impulses by pacifying the user, interfering with muscular coordination, reducing psychomotor activities, and generally producing states of drowsiness, lethargy, timidity and passivity." ¹

Fact: Researchers on prohibition policies and violence reported in 2000 that "decriminalization ... would decrease violence associated with attempts to control illicit markets and as resolutions to disputes between buyers and sellers. Moreover, because the perception of violence associated with the drug market can lead people who are not directly involved to be prepared for violent self-defense, there could be additional reductions in peripheral settings where disputes arise." ²

1. Shafer, Raymond P., et al, Marihuana: A Signal of Misunderstanding, Ch. III,(Washington D.C.: National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse, 1972)

2. Jensen, Gary F., "Prohibition, Alcohol, and Murder: Untangling Countervailing Mechanisms," Homicide Studies, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA February 2000) pp 33-4.

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