



4/20, where's the money?

By: Molly Philbin – April 23, 2013

April 20 is a “holiday” dedicated to celebrating marijuana — the nation’s most popular illegal drug. Chronic laziness and cotton mouth plague the youth on a day, colloquially known as “4/20.”

Its adherents shortened the name to three syllables because saying “April the twentieth,” at a whopping six syllables, requires too much effort apparently.

But, even after a day of having the “munchies” and being blown away by reruns of “Grandma’s Boy,” the nation has to wonder why the drug is not yet legalized.

A recent poll conducted by the Pew Research Center found that 52 percent of responders favored legalizing pot use, while only 45 percent opposed.

A 1969 Gallup poll on the same subject revealed just 12 percent favored legalization, while 84 percent opposed.

A majority of Americans support weed legalization, according to a Pew Research Center poll released at the beginning of this month.

So, what’s changed?

Whether or not people like marijuana or support its legalization, the nation has realized that its prohibition is a shining example of an ineffective and bloated government program.

Eighteen states and Washington, D.C. have already made medical marijuana legal and 10 others are currently considering legislation to legalize the drug, according to the National Cannabis Industry Association.

As thick as the cloud of smoke may be, lawmakers should continue to be encouraged to look into national legalization when considering ways to balance the national budget.

The federal legalization of marijuana would offer approximately \$8.7 billion in federal and state tax revenue annually, according to a research from the Cato Institute.

A fair argument is that illegal drugs should remain illegal to protect the youth and physical and mental health, however according to New York's 1944 LaGuardia Committee Report and 1894's Indian Hemp Drugs Commission concluded that "Marijuana's relative potential for harm to the vast majority of individual users and its actual impact on society does not justify a social policy designed to seek out and firmly punish those who use it."

Aside from being glued to a couch glossed in Cheetos dust, there are no critical side effects or health concerns associated with hitting the bong.

Assuming that legalized marijuana would be taxed similarly to alcohol and tobacco, and that the income earned by pot producers would be subject to standard income and sales tax, this herb-based drug is a God-sent.

It is not about politics, acceptance of living out of a Volkswagen van, or drug administration and safety, it is about money — money we would all benefit from if accessed.