

One drug, two nations and the marijuana debate

ADITYA GARG AND TY GOOCH
STAFF WRITERS

Pot fanatics are not holding it in any longer. Not only on campus, but nationwide, advocates for the legalization of marijuana have clearly voiced their demands.

In November 2013, Colorado and Washington became the first states to legalize marijuana, sparking nationwide movements and policy debates.

"The pulse of the country is changing and moving towards legalization and decriminalization," said Will Pizio, associate professor of justice and policy studies. "I don't think it's right for us to stand in the way."

Similar sentiments were expressed by first-year Chris Honein.

"I definitely support legalization," Honein said. "I support any way to get my weed easier."

Medicinal Value

To others, the answer to the legalization debate is not so straightforward: a distinction must be drawn between recreational and medicinal marijuana, they argue.

"When most people think of medical marijuana these days, they don't think of Dronabinol; they think of the entire leafy portion of the plant, usually being smoked," said Kevin Sabet, former senior adviser for policy to the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy in the Obama administration, in an email interview with The Guilfordian.

Earlier this year, Sabet founded Project SAM (Smart Approaches to Marijuana), a combined initiative by medical doctors, lawmakers, and law enforcement to find a "middle road between incarceration and legalization."

"(People) don't smoke opium to get the medicinal benefits of morphine or eat willow bark to get the benefits of aspirin — why not apply the same logic to marijuana?" Sabet asked.

While many advocates of legalization expect marijuana to play a role in treating Crohn's disease, cancer, and glaucoma, Early College senior Brent Eisenbarth, a victim of glaucoma, was skeptical.

"No doctor that I have spoken with has seriously entertained the option of medical marijuana," said Eisenbarth. "Glaucoma has lifelong implications, and other drugs and surgical operations are more effective."

Those who argue against legalization also point to marijuana's addictive qualities, claiming that addictive harm from the drug far outweighs any medical benefit.

David Long is a former special agent with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General, Division of Labor Racketeering. He pointed to the higher rates of addiction associated with alcohol and tobacco in comparison to marijuana.

"Tobacco and alcohol have much higher addiction rates," Long said in a phone interview with The Guilfordian. "The logical argument then follows that, rather than banning marijuana, we should ban tobacco and alcohol. Nicotine is one of the most addictive drugs and yet is legal."

Long recently joined Law Enforcement Against Prohibition, a nonprofit of criminal justice professionals who "bear witness to the harms of our current drug policies."

While Sabet also admitted to marijuana's lower addiction rates, he highlighted several negative effects of its use.

"Addiction is not the only reason for which we should continue to restrict marijuana," Sabet said. "Its use is significantly related to other serious health consequences such as mental illness, schizophrenia and hindered cognitive development (particularly for children)."

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Manning: LGBT patriot or traitor?

BY ROBERT PACHECO
STAFF WRITER

"I believed I was going to help people ... because without information, you cannot make informed decisions as a public," said U.S. Army Private Chelsea Manning.

Manning was sentenced to 35 years in prison after leaking 700,000 classified government documents to WikiLeaks. Soon after the sentencing, Manning released a statement informing the world of her wish to be identified as "Chelsea Manning ... a female."

"I am Chelsea Manning," she told NBC's "Today" show. "I am a female. Given the way that I feel, and have felt since (my) childhood, I want to begin hormone therapy as soon as possible."

Transgender war veteran Aaron Myracle of Iraq Veterans Against War supports Manning's disclosure.

"I think it's deeply flawed to consider Chelsea's supporters unpatriotic," Myracle told The Guilfordian.



Near Iceland's U.S. embassy, citizens ask for Manning's release.

"(Manning exposed) crimes being carried out in our names as Americans ... she should never have been put on trial. Exposing war crimes is certainly not a crime."

A 2007 U.S. helicopter attack in Baghdad that resulted in the deaths of two Reuters journalists is one such "crime" that Myracle and Manning's supporters highlight.

And while they see a patriot in Manning, others deem her a traitor.

"American Veterans for Equal Rights condemns the action of any service member who would betray the vital trust by publicizing information that could easily jeopardize the lives of our courageous young men and women serving in danger," AVER Public Affairs officer Denny Meyer told The Guilfordian.

Did Manning's gender identity crisis play into her questionable decision to leak confidential files?

Meyer and Myracle have conflicting views. "This has nothing to do with whether Private Manning is LGBT or not," Meyer said. "It is a matter of the largest act of treason in our nation's history."

"I believe that being transgender naturally puts one in a position to see things differently," Myracle said. "When you are an outsider in society, you're inclined to stop trying to fit in."

LGBTQQA Coordinator Parker Hurley agreed, saying that "Manning resisting systems that criminalize the body inspired the notion of thinking outside the status quo."

With the increasing trend of whistleblowers exposing state secrets to WikiLeaks, some argue the importance of distinguishing the nature of Manning's and Edward Snowden's cases.

"There are distinct differences between what Chelsea Manning has been sentenced to 35 years in Leavenworth for and what Edward Snowden is on the run for," Myracle said.

While Manning exposed approximately 700,000 classified documents, the extent of information that Snowden leaked from the National Security Agency is largely undetermined, as is Snowden's precise location.

Ariel Castro found guilty of 977 counts of rape, kidnapping, assault, commits suicide in prison

BY NICOLE BARNARD
STAFF WRITER

On Sept. 3, Ariel Castro hanged himself in his prison cell in Franklin County, Ohio, after being sentenced to life in prison plus 1,000 years.

"This man couldn't take, for even a month, a small portion of what he had dished out for over a decade," prosecutor Timothy J. McGinty told the New York Daily News.

With the hope of avoiding the death penalty, Castro had earlier pleaded guilty to 977 counts of rape, kidnapping and sexual abuse.

Lisa McLeod, associate professor of philosophy, speculated on the reason for Castro's decision to take his own life. "Assuming it was suicide, it would give him more sense of control," she said.

First-year Mara Stern agrees with McLeod.

"He didn't want to serve the sentence," she said. "He wanted to die at his own hands."

Information about Castro's mental status has recently come to light. Castro's defense attorneys claim that Castro was a sociopath, meaning that

his actions may have been influenced by his mental instability.

When asked what she thought about Castro's mental state, McLeod said, "I think that there was something wrong, or at least I hope there was. I don't want to believe that healthy people could act that way."

According to columnist Mary Sanchez, the federal prison system allowing Castro's suicide is "a slap in the face to justice." In an article for Chicago Tribune, Sanchez wrote that "(in addition to) protecting the rest from society, prison serves ... to rehabilitate, to punish, and to do justice to victims."

The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that death by suicide is the leading cause of death in prison —

more prevalent than murder, drug overdose and accidents combined.

"Given the prevalence of mental health problems in the nation's prisons, this might not be that surprising," Sanchez said. "But it's doubtful that the deaths of less notable inmates will ever receive the level of publicity and scrutiny given to Castro's death."

After the fact, questions continue to surround Castro's case.

Should Castro have been watched more closely, especially if he had a sociopathic disorder as his attorneys claim? Did he cheat his victims out of justice?

The answers can be debated but one thing is certain: the entire prison system will be under much scrutiny after this case.

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Lisa McLeod, associate professor of philosophy