Junior organizes marijuana legalization club

Missouri Marijuana Laws

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possession or Trafficking</th>
<th>Incarceration</th>
<th>Fine</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35 g or less</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 g to 35 kg</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sale or Cultivation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30 to 100 kg (trafficking)</td>
<td>5 to 15 years</td>
<td>$5,000 to $20,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>100 kg or more (trafficking)</td>
<td>10 years to life</td>
<td>$5,000 to $20,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paraphernalia possession</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paraphernalia sale</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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Photo & Design by Victoria Weaver & Roger Meissen

Cannabis on Campus?

One student’s goal on campus is to shatter the myths he said have been created around the use of marijuana.

Junior Josh Kappel is in the process of organizing a National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) chapter on campus. He said NORML is a political organization that tends to change public perceptions surrounding marijuana use.

He said a lot of countries in Europe are destigmatizing marijuana and trying to separate marijuana from hard-core drug use.

“You can’t just jump for legalization,” Kappel said. “You have to take steps in rethinking the whole issue.”

Kappel said he hopes one day people will look at marijuana prohibition like they do at alcohol prohibition.

“I have been in the history behind the prohibition of marijuana in America, you can see how the government completely lied to the public about what it does, just to try to deter people from using marijuana,” he said.

Through NORML, Kappel said he wants to educate people about marijuana and help people learn the truth. He said the National Institute of Drug Abuse controls a lot of the research on marijuana, and it does not give other researchers permission to go public with their results.

“Only people who know the truth,” Kappel said. “That is why I want to start NORML.”

According to NORML’s War site, the University of Missouri, Columbia, Central Missouri State University and Williams Baptist University have NORML chapters.

“Missouri is a state that is struggling to come up and get in the same society as other people that are around it,” said Kappel.

“I think you would want to start NORML,” he said. “I think there is a lot of people who are interested.”

“When people grow up, they are always hearing, ‘Oh, cannabis is so wrong, like, don’t become a pothead,’” Kappel said. “The actual marijuana use, he said, ‘let’s be realistic, people live.’

He said 700,000 people are arrested each year because of marijuana use, according to NORML’s information. People need to know this is a lot of societal money stopping drug trafficking, especially marijuana, Kappel said.

“We need to know that, because of what marijuana is doing to our society and they are doing,” he said.

“The local police are really focusing on marijuana, and that is what they are trying to shut out because they are paying people’s fines,” Kappel said. “You think, ‘I made a mistake, now what?’

“I hope the laws would make people think a little bit about what they are doing,” Johnson said.

They are four drug-related arrests on campus in 2004, Johnson said. “Marijuana is always a concern, I have not heard about big problems,” Johnson said.

Kappel, Student Union Building director, said there are many hurdles to forming student organization like NORML, because student will engage in intelligent conversation.

“The thing about marijuana and drugs is it’s like a political subject,” Johnson said. “It is the law of the land. It is for or against, similar to abortion.”

Johnson said all people have the right to smoke marijuana on campus as long as they are not breaking laws or University policies. The law will be automatic so that no one will have to worry about that.

“Myussen said we are pretty conservative campus,” Johnson said. “If we see a student use marijuana, we will approach them and say, ‘We have an education law.’

“Students have an expectation of education,” Johnson said. “It is important that organizations are areas of University policies. For instance, NORML will not be able to use a marijuana leaf for on-campus publicity.”

NORML may face resistance from these organizations of its mission.

“I think they probably think about how they are going to handle being in the spotlight. Johnson said. “Some of that is going to be very tricky and probably not very well respected.”

Kappel said he should not face opposition and he hopes he doesn’t.

“I’m not doing anything wrong,” Kappel said. “I am just trying to bring awareness.”

Kappel said he plans on educating students on the truth about marijuana with passing out information, showing documentaries and hosting events like NORML Constitution Week and NORML Constitution Day, which is a non-profit event working on the NORML constitution and will have an informational meeting for interested people soon.

Sujit Chemburkar, Student Union
director, said, “We have an expectation of education, you cannot have a smoking policy.”

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