

The Legalization of Marijuana in The Bahamas: A Bibliography

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Abstract

This bibliography provides a list of Bahamian and international government reports and a selection of newspaper articles regarding the legalization of marijuana (cannabis) in The Bahamas. The sources include viewpoints of medical professionals, government officials, religious groups, and the public. Research was undertaken on this topical subject to produce a list of relevant, useful resources to inform the debate.

Introduction

The legalization of marijuana is a very timely and provocative topic in The Bahamas today. While designated as an unlawful substance and dangerous drug in the Bahamas in 1939 (Fraser, 1974, p. 365), the use of marijuana has persevered in Caribbean countries and globally. In 2014, CARICOM Heads of Government established the CARICOM Regional Commission on Marijuana to explore the possible reform of legislation in CARICOM countries. The Bahamas, as a member of the CARICOM community, agreed to explore the legal, social, medicinal and religious issues associated with marijuana by establishing its own Bahamas National Commission on Marijuana in 2018.

There are many viewpoints on the issue. The Rastafarians want it legalized for use in their worship services. The Bahamas Christian Council would agree to the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes only. While the Bahamian Government views marijuana legalization as a social justice issue: wanting to decriminalize possession of small amounts of marijuana and expunge criminal records of

people convicted of possession. In addition, entrepreneurs focus on the economic and financial benefits that would accrue from legalization and the development of a niche tourism market (Rolle, 2020). The Bahamian public however, would prefer to proceed with caution with the proposed legislation. The fear is that legalizing marijuana for medicinal purposes would be abused and might result in an increase of criminal activity. As a result, the Bahamian National Commission will conduct a poll to gauge public opinion before making a formal recommendation to Government.

The list of entries is not comprehensive, but aims to provide relevant resources with links to articles, reports and legislation. Readers are referred to the bibliography on substance and drug abuse published in this journal for background (Pinder-Darling & Ballance, 2017).

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