

Fellow students, primarily sponsored by Katrina Haffner, would like to spread awareness of state and federal government action on policies regarding the genus of plants known as Cannabis, better known as industrial hemp and marijuana. Washington state has a relatively long history with instating legislation in regards to Cannabis, from its medical marijuana laws approved by voters in 1998 to the passage passed in 2012 and gradual implementation of Washington State Initiative-502, legalizing small amounts of Cannabis for recreational use for persons 21 and older.

Industrial hemp's purposes range from extracting the seeds, fibers, and cellulose contained within the plant to produce food, textiles, and construction materials. In 2013, a bipartisan group of senators introduced language into a farm bill that passed in February of 2014, which allowed states to grow industrial hemp for research. This past January, two more bills, one in the House of Representatives and the other in the Senate, were introduced that would remove federal restrictions on the cultivation of industrial hemp. With the implementation of legal hemp cultivation in Colorado through Amendment 64 and the vocal support on both the federal level and within different states, most notably Kentucky, it has shown the country's desire to take industrial hemp off of the Controlled Substances Act. Alongside that, a survey from YouGov, conducted in 2013, showed that 56% of its sample supported the growing of hemp within the U.S.

As of October 2013, Gallup found 58% of Americans believe in the legalization of marijuana. Despite the legality for adults 21 and older in Washington state to use recreational marijuana, usage on federal lands, including public universities, still carry severe penalties, including fines, incarceration, and loss of financial aid. Several studies have confirmed that people of color are incarcerated at a higher rate than white people, despite similar rates of usage. Harvard University professor Jeffrey A. Miron and late Nobel laureate Milton Friedman, as well as other notable economists have linked the violence of drug cartels in Mexico and the U.S. to the black market resulting from the illegality of certain drugs, including marijuana.

Even with states legalizing and decriminalizing the production, cultivation, and sales of marijuana and industrial hemp, the federal government still has the power to ignore the states' legislation and go after any offending organization and individuals if they so wished to.

Within the context of protecting fellow students from unjust federal laws and in support of human rights, Haffner and her peers would like to show student support, through a declarative statement on behalf of the WWU Associated Students, for the sustainable farming, production, processing, and sale of Cannabis, as well as goods made from Cannabis, for both personal and industrial use.

*Shall the Associated Students of Western Washington University urge the AS Board of Directors to incorporate their state and federal legislative agendas to support policies and legislation that aid in the legalization of sustainable farming, production, processing, and sale of the Cannabis plant, as well as goods made from Cannabis for both personal and industrial use?*