American Medical Association Against Criminalizing Marijuana:
Cannabis was legal in the US until the Marihuana Tax Act of 1937.¹ The AMA objected to restricting access to marijuana. Dr. William C. Woodard testified that the Act would deprive Americans of a drug of substantial value. He refuted claims that marijuana led to addiction, violence, and overdoses.² The campaign against “marijuana” replaced the FBI’s enforcement of Prohibition when it was ended in 1933.

Cannabis was part of the American pharmacopoeia until 1942 and was used to treat neuralgia, tetanus, typhus, cholera, rabies, anthrax, leprosy, tonsillitis, dysentery, insanity, excessive menstrual and uterine bleeding.³ Despite the known medical effectiveness of cannabis, the Act was passed.

Individual Liberty:
The conservative Reason Foundation reviewed marijuana data and concluded “the evidence suggests that legalization of marijuana for medical or recreational use reaffirms individual liberty” without harming the public. Legalization has potential medical benefits and appears to reduce crime and traffic deaths.⁴

Cost to North Carolina Taxpayers:
Between 2001-2010, North Carolina and its counties spent $55 million on courts, prisons and enforcing marijuana laws, more than $6 million annually based on the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting Program. Between 2001 and 2010 more than 8 million Americans were arrested for marijuana offenses; 88% of the arrests were for simple possession. From 1990 to 2010 there was a 188% increase in the number of people arrested for marijuana offenses.⁵

The Journal of Drug Issues, College of Criminology and Criminal Justice reported a cost stating that U.S. law enforcement against marijuana sale/possession was estimated to cost close to $8 billion a year in criminal justice resources. “These results raise significant questions about the merits of policies that focus on criminal justice approaches to marijuana control.”⁶

Contrary to Myths Legalization Reduces Criminal Activity:
The American Journal on Addiction published a longitudinal assessment of FBI data revealing that in states that legalized medical marijuana, the crime rates decreased.⁷

The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse published a study of a large national sample of arrestees who tested positive for illegal drug use. The study found a low relationship between marijuana and aggression. Meanwhile they found that frequent use of alcohol does correlate strongly to aggressive crimes.⁸

The Economic Journal reported that legal medical marijuana in states bordering Mexico saw significant reductions in homicides and aggravated assaults. A decreased demand for marijuana smuggled from Mexico reduced the “activity of Mexican drug trafficking organizations and affiliated gangs, along with the violence these organizations use to maintain control of the market.” Also there’s a reduction of legal marijuana for opiates and other drugs as well as a reduction in drunk driving.⁹

Reduced Overall Traffic Deaths:
The Journal Of Law And Economics (2019) studied the correlation between medical marijuana and traffic fatalities. In the first year after legalization, 19 states experienced an 8-11 percent drop in overall traffic fatalities,¹⁰ and continued to drop further for three years. This suggests that when marijuana is illegal, people are more inclined to use alcohol.¹¹

The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) replicated parts of the above study using a slightly different methodology and time period (1990–2009). It came to similar conclusions, finding that alcohol-related traffic fatalities dropped.¹²
Evidence published in American Journal of Public Health (2018) found a "reduction in fatalities, primarily a result of reduced drunk driving" consistent with earlier findings that legal alcohol is used instead of illegal marijuana. Alcohol consumption is strongly correlated with dangerous driving while marijuana use does not correlate with impaired driving.13

A study by the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (NHTSA-2017) in Virginia Beach found the presence of THC had no statistically significant effect on traffic crash likelihood when demographic factors are considered.14

The American Journal on Addiction reported "unlike drivers under the influence of alcohol, drivers who have used marijuana tend to overestimate their impairment and may try to compensate by driving more slowly and increasing following distance.¹⁵ Blood tests don’t accurately measure impairment since THC can be detected up to a month after marijuana is consumed.16 The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s training includes the Detection and Standardized Field Sobriety Testing (SFST) ‘This training, developed under the auspices and direction of the NHTSA and the IACP, has experienced remarkable success since its inception in the early 1980s.¹⁷ The same is true for suspected marijuana-impaired drivers.

The American Journal of Public Health explored the same relationships with a longer time period (1985–2014) and more states with operational dispensaries. They found medical marijuana states had lower traffic fatality rates, with a decrease on average of 10.8%.¹⁸

A controlled assessment by the National Bureau of Economic Research found Colorado and Washington experienced no increased traffic deaths.¹⁹

The Program in Criminology, University of Texas found reductions in traffic fatalities especially among 25-44 year olds when medical marijuana and dispensaries were legalized.²⁰

A 2016 study reported in Journal of Applied Toxicology using a driving simulator found that marijuana actually mitigated some of the effects of alcohol by reducing the time spent above the speed limit.²¹

2 “Medical use of Marijuana-History” https://medicalmarijuana.uslegal.com
3 Medical use of Marijuana History* https://medicalmarijuana.uslegal.com
5 “The War on Marijuana in Black and White” ACLU Foundation June, 2013,
7 “The Effect of Medical Marijuana Laws on Crime: Evidence from State Panel Data, 1990-2006” Program in Criminology, University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, Texas, United States of America Feb 25, 2014
17 "DWI Section & Standardized Field Sobriety Testing Instructor Guide" National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration Feb, 2018