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Answers

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1. Policy-Making Process Stages and Legalization of Marijuana

Policy-making is a kind of cyclical process that can be applied to the assumed situation of the legalization of marijuana. Although few states like Colorado, Florida, and others have legalized or about to legalize marijuana, it is not done at the federal level. So, if legalization is to be done at the federal level, according to the policy-making process stages, it has to begin with the agenda setting stage. The agenda setting stage begins when the attention of the public is focused on some key public problems. On those lines, the need to legalize marijuana has become a key public issue due to the federal-state conflicts that may arise because of the legalization by certain states. Although the Department of Justice recently announced that the “federal government will not prosecute marijuana-based offenses in states that have already legalized marijuana” (Bullock, 2013), there are possibilities of conflicts between those states and the states where marijuana is non-legalized, and that sets the agenda. In the next stage of policy formulation, the policymakers in the legislature as well as the bureaucracy have to “formulate legislative, regulatory, or programmatic strategies to address the problem” (“Policy Making,” n.d.). As far as the legalization of marijuana is concerned, the policymakers have to first formulate policies and action plans to overcome any national as well as international laws that have been previously passed or ratified against the use of marijuana. In the third stage of policy adoption, the policymakers will formally develop or adopt particular solutions “in the form of laws or bureaucratic rules” (“Policy Making,” n.d.) based on the above policy proposals. To legalize marijuana, the policymakers have to come up with strategies on how to withdraw from international drug conventions like the UN’s 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs

(Bullock, 2013). Then, at the national level, they have to focus on the clauses that can be incorporated to make it an effective and useful federal law. Once adopted, in the interrelated fourth and fifth stage of policy evaluation and policy implementation, governmental agencies have to initiate the task of officially formulating policies and evaluating it. On those lines, the policymakers have to come up with official guidance documents that stipulate all the tenets of the law, the desecrations, and how those desecrations can be punished. In addition, the policymakers have to conduct meetings with the public, healthcare professionals, experts, and others to discuss all the pros and cons of the law, so needed revisions can be done on its faulty aspects.

2. Reagan Administration's Policy of Supply-Side Economics

During the Presidential campaign of 1980, the then U.S. President Ronald Reagan came up with an economic policy called supply-side economics as a recipe to solve the problems plaguing the American economy and thereby uplift it. Under this policy, Reagan proposed around 30 percent tax cut, reducing the income tax rates, and capital gains tax rates, particularly focusing on the upper income groups ("Reaganomics," n.d.). That is, he intended to reduce those tax rates for the rich businessmen, investors, and others for the first three years of his presidency. The economic or even social theory behind this policy was those rich sections of the population due to tax cuts would have surplus funds, which they could invest in more economic as well as employment activities thereby stimulating the economy. Thus, the benefits of that stimulation could trickle down to the overall economy providing economic benefits to wider sections of the population. In addition, "Reagan believed that a tax cut of this nature would ultimately generate even more revenue for the federal government" ("Reaganomics," n.d.). Although Reagan

proposed 30 percent tax, because of the skepticism surrounding this plan, the Congress approved only 25 percent cut during Reagan's first term ("Reaganomics," n.d.). When one takes into account the critics' opinion regarding this policy, the skepticism appears to be true. According to the economists who opposed this policy, the tax cuts reduced federal government's revenue sizably running into trillions of dollars. Although Reagan advocated slashing the government programs to make up for the above shortfalls, the Congress "refused to make any deep cuts to the welfare state" ("Reaganomics," n.d.). In addition, the tax cuts and the resultant high interest rates led to the rise in the dollar's value in the international exchange market thereby making the American products more costly abroad. This in a way decreased exports of American products even while increasing imports, and the resultant skewed trade affected the American economy. Although Reagan came up with the policy of supply-side economics to optimize the American economy, it did not work as expected.

3. Federal Laws to Limit Access to Guns and Ammunition, Preemption of State Laws

The federal laws to limit access to guns and ammunitions are being preempted or challenged by the state governments. The states are coming up with their own legislations to ease gun control using the pretext of validating their autonomy. Federal government on their part is invoking key constitutional provisions to support their gun control measures and thereby completely preempt any passing of state laws. Considering this conflict, it appears that the federal government in association with the Congress and the judiciary need to handle this controversial issue. The key constitutional provision that backs federal government to preempt the state laws is the Supremacy Clause of Article VI of the U.S. Constitution. Under this provision, "federal laws are binding on all state and local governments so long as Congress duly

enacted the law pursuant to one of its limited powers” (“Local Authority,” 2013). The federal government can use by this provision directly to preempt the state laws in favor of gun use and as an argument when the conflict reaches the judicial channels. The counterargument used by the states is that under the Ninth and the Tenth Amendments, states can allow the sale of guns and ammunitions under the terms of intrastate commerce thereby freeing those sales from the purview of federal laws. However, this perspective is being countered by the federal government using the Article I, which gives the federal government and the Congress the power to “regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes” (“Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence,” 2010). In addition, the American judiciary has also backed the federal government in this issue by favorably ruling in key cases on how federal laws can preempt state laws. “The Justice Department argued that the courts have already decided Congress, with its power to regulate interstate commerce, can set standards on such items as guns” (“Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence,” 2010). To sum up, it is obvious that the federal government in association with the Congress and the judiciary can aptly handle this constitutional showdown.

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