Contemporary Social Reform Movements

Choose one of the following social reforms to research; reform of marijuana laws, health care reform, and financial institutions reform.

Social reform is defined as: a kind of social movement that aims to make gradual change, or change in certain aspects of society, rather than rapid or fundamental changes. A reform movement is distinguished from more radical social movements such as revolutionary movements.

What is the issue at the heart of the reform movement? Simplify the movement into a single goal.

For the following questions, use the available websites to find factual evidence to support your answers. A fact is something measurable. Dates, quotes, financial figures, and news reports count as facts. OPINIONS DO NOT COUNT AS FACTS.

1. Does this issue meet the criteria of a social reform issue? Why or why not?

2. What events suggest that this issue was on people’s minds in the past? List events surrounding the issue that would have been discussed. Explain what happened, how it relates to the issue, and why each event may have contributed to the growth of this issue as a social reform issue.

3. Who, person or organization, took a leadership role to move the issue from the fringe to the mainstream? What were their goals, how did they relate to the events that people were talking about?

4. Choose one of the organizations working to promote the social reform. How do their efforts reflect the work of the early leaders? Are they the same as the goals related to the events that led to the emergence of the issue?

5. Is this issue in decline? There are five ways a social movement can go into decline; success, failure, co-option, repression, integrating with the mainstream. If this issue is in decline, why is it in decline and what is likely to happen next?
Legalization of Marijuana

Background (emergence)

Who’s who of reform efforts (coalescence)
1. http://origins.osu.edu/article/illegalization-marijuana-brief-history/page/0/1

Organizations at work (bureaucratization)
3. https://www.mpp.org/

Is it over? (decline)

Health care reform

Background (emergence)

Who’s who of reform efforts (coalescence)
Organizations at work (bureaucratization)

Is it over? (decline)
1. http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/29/6/1112.full

Financial Institutions Reform

Background (emergence)
2. https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/nec/speeches/reforming-renewing-financial-system

Who’s who of reform efforts (coalescence)

Organizations at work (bureaucratization)

Is it over? (decline)