

Federal: President Signs Spending Budget But Says Medical Marijuana Provision, "Could Interfere With His Constitutional Authority"

8 May 2017

When in doubt sow a little more confusion..

The Hill reports

President Trump issued his first "signing statement" Friday on a \$1 trillion spending bill to fund the government through September.

In the statement, Trump said that some provisions of the bill could interfere with his constitutional authority, arguing that he isn't legally bound to limits imposed by Congress such as one banning the Justice Department from interfering with state medical marijuana laws.

"Division B, section 537 provides that the Department of Justice may not use any funds to prevent implementation of medical marijuana laws by various States and territories. I will treat this provision consistently with my constitutional responsibility," his statement reads.

Marijuana advocates earlier this week cheered the spending bill's provision, which protects certain states that have legalized marijuana amid fears that the Trump administration would rein in legalization laws.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions has a long history of opposing marijuana, telling a conference of state attorneys general in February that he's "dubious" to the drug's benefits. He has also called the drug "more dangerous ... than a lot of people realize."

"Marijuana is against federal law, and that applies in states where they may have repealed their own anti-marijuana laws," Sessions told conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt in March. "So yes, we will enforce law in an appropriate way nationwide."

Twenty-nine states, as well as the District of Columbia, have medical marijuana laws on the books, while 21 states have decriminalized the drug.

Presidents typically release statements when signing legislation, which they can use to raise constitutional objections or explain the president's position on an issue.

In his statement Friday, Trump also took issue with language requiring advance notice of military action and restricting the transfer of detainees from Guantanamo Bay.

In both cases, Trump said he would treat the provisions “consistently with my constitutional authority as Commander in Chief” and “and consistent with my constitutional authority and duty as Commander in Chief to protect national security.”

<http://thehill.com/policy/finance/332182-trump-pushes-back-against-ban-on-state-medical-marijuana-interference>