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Not all happy with Obama medical marijuana policy

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Medical marijuana patient goes shopping for pot in a San Francisco medicinal cannabis dispensary. (Dino Voumas/Ap photo)

The issue of marijuana legalization, whether for medicinal use or not, has long been a litmus test for differentiating champions of freedom from authoritarians.

That hasn't changed after Attorney General Eric Holder issued a memo on Monday asking federal prosecutors not to target marijuana users and distributors in states that allow medical marijuana.

The [Libertarian Party](#) issued a news release quoting their executive director, Wes Benedict, as saying, "This is a small step in the right direction." The LP has been

opposed to victimless crime laws since its inception in 1971. Benedict's statement also urged the Obama administration to "take further steps to end the destructive, unjust, unconstitutional War on Drugs."

The [Cato Institute](#), a libertarian think tank headquartered in Washington, DC, echoed the sentiment as "A good first step."

And, predictably, the [Marijuana Policy Project](#) (MPP) greeted the news as "the most significant, positive policy development on the federal level for medical marijuana since 1978."

This would seem to take California's medical marijuana users off the hook since medicinal cannabis is legal under state law. But apparently they are now at the mercy of their own state prosecutors.

Today's University of California, Los Angeles student newspaper [Daily Bruin](#) reports that in spite of the Holder memo City Attorney Carmen Trutanich and Los Angeles County District Attorney Steve Cooley plan to "drastically reduce the number of medical marijuana dispensaries in Los Angeles" on the grounds that "they violate state law, which bans the sale and distribution of marijuana."

The article goes on to quote Dale Gieringer, director of the California National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws ([NORML](#)) who said that the memo is essentially a restatement of what Holder said earlier in the year and actually gives Cooley and Trutanich broad authority to decide what is legal.

The biggest name opposing the Obama policy is arguably Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa). The senator declared, "That federal law ought to be enforced." He justified his position with the so-called "restaurant down" theory: "I think that medicine is a restaurant to handle drugs use." Grassley said

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