

Holder announces changes to federal marijuana enforcement policy

Written by Australian Business

September 24, 2013 /**24-7PressRelease**/ -- Holder announces changes to federal marijuana enforcement policy

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As attitudes toward marijuana possession have seemingly changed in parts of the country recently, the federal government recently addressed changes to its policy regarding the enforcement of marijuana crimes. Currently, marijuana possession is illegal under the Controlled Substances Act.

Despite the federal prohibition, some states have decriminalized the possession of small amounts of marijuana. According to Attorney General Eric Holder, federal prosecutors will not take action to prevent those states from implementing those changes.

Instead, Holder announced that the Department of Justice will now focus on prosecuting marijuana crimes that involve eight main types of offenses. For instance, federal prosecutors will continue to pursue charges against those who are believed to have sold marijuana to minors. In addition, the Department of Justice will focus on prosecuting those who are involved in drug cartels and situations in which violence is used during the process of cultivating and distributing marijuana.

As most states continue to impose criminal penalties on those found in possession of marijuana, the Department of Justice will also prosecute those who are involved in distributing marijuana from states where possession is legal to others where possession has yet to be decriminalized.

Fight marijuana possession charges in Maryland

Of course, the change in practice among federal prosecutors does not mean individuals will no longer face charges for low-level marijuana possession across the country. At a state level, individuals are still required to abide by state law and could face criminal charges if they fail to adhere to their state's marijuana possession laws.

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In Maryland, the penalties an individual may face for marijuana possession depend on the quantity of the substance found in his or her possession. If an individual is charged and convicted of possessing 10 grams or less of marijuana, he or she could face up to 90 days in jail and a fine of up to \$500. For those found with 10 grams to 50 pounds of marijuana, the penalties are more severe. In such cases, the individual could be incarcerated for up to one year and be fined up to \$1,000.

The charges are more serious if the individual is charged with possessing marijuana with the intent to distribute. The most severe penalties are reserved for those charged with intending to distribute more than 50 pounds of marijuana. In such cases, the individual could be jailed for 20 to 40 years and be fined up to \$1,000,000.

If you are facing charges of marijuana possession, you should be aware of your rights. Seek the advice of a knowledgeable criminal defense attorney to ensure a strong defense is established on your behalf.