

Trump administration abandons crackdown on legal marijuana

By Evan Halper, Los Angeles Times

The Trump administration is abandoning a Justice Department threat to crack down on recreational marijuana in states where it is legal, a move that could enable cannabis businesses in California and other states that have legalized pot to operate without fear of federal raids and prosecution.

President Trump personally directed the abrupt retreat, which came at the behest of Republican Sen. Cory Gardner of Colorado. White House officials confirmed the policy shift Friday. Trump did not inform Attorney General Jeff Sessions in advance of the change in policy, an almost unheard of undermining of a Cabinet official.

Gardner was incensed in January when the Justice Department announced that it was rescinding an Obama-era policy that directed federal prosecutors not to target marijuana businesses that operate legally under state law. The senator had blocked Justice Department nominees in retaliation.

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