

A Battle of Wills on D.C.'s Pot Law

The Washington Post
03.27.2015

Andrew Herman authored an article in *The Washington Post* following a February 2015 letter from House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) and Representative Mark Meadows (R-NC). The letter contends that a continuing resolution enacted last December barred the District of Columbia's use of appropriated funds to legalize marijuana, and characterized Mayor Muriel Bowser's decision on Initiative 71 as a violation of that bar.

According to Herman, "the letter reads more like a grand jury subpoena than a legislative inquiry," and Representative Chaffetz's "authority extends to writing laws regulating conduct within the District, not serving as a self-appointed city sheriff." Chaffetz's demands "both overstep the bounds of Congress's legislative power and threaten the viability of any legitimate legal inquiry into this process," he said.

As a consequence to Chaffetz's actions, Mayor Bowser may opt to ignore the requests for information contained in the letter completely. "Ironically, Chaffetz's statements could undermine any legitimate legal inquiry into Bowser's actions undertaken by appropriate law enforcement authorities," Herman said. "One can understand why Chaffetz would be miffed about Bowser's decision to proceed. But threatening letters on congressional letterhead will simply not cut it."