

Trump Swaps Anti Cannabis Prosecutor for Fox Host on Pot Board

Trump Replaces Anti Cannabis Prosecutor With Fox Host Linked to CBD Industry

President Names Jeanine Pirro as Acting U.S. Attorney After Pulling Nomination of Ed Martin Over Non-Marijuana Controversies

In a controversial shakeup, President Donald Trump has named Jeanine Pirro—a Fox News personality with ties to the cannabis industry—as acting U.S. attorney in Washington, D.C., replacing former nominee Ed Martin, who had previously threatened legal action against a local medical marijuana dispensary.

The move comes after the administration pulled Martin’s nomination following unrelated controversies, although his aggressive stance on cannabis had drawn concern from advocates. Trump’s latest pick, Pirro, marks a significant shift in tone given her past involvement with a CBD company, despite her stated opposition to broader marijuana legalization.

Jeanine Pirro’s Role in CBD Industry Signals a Softer Approach to Cannabis

Jeanine Pirro, best known for hosting “Justice with Judge Jeanine” on Fox News, joined the board of CBD company HeavenlyRx in 2019. At the time, she described her decision as rooted in curiosity and growing interest in wellness alternatives, suggesting a personal evolution from skepticism to cautious support of cannabidiol-based health products.

Her statement that she was “excited to be a part of the opportunity for people to access fantastic wellness options” suggested openness to at least parts of the cannabis industry. However, Pirro has made it clear that her support stops short of advocating for recreational marijuana legalization, distinguishing her stance from many in the broader cannabis reform movement.

Contrast in Cannabis Enforcement Philosophy With Predecessor Ed Martin

Pirro’s appointment marks a notable contrast to Ed Martin’s tenure and rhetoric. Martin, who Trump initially intended to install as U.S. attorney in D.C., had previously issued warnings to licensed dispensaries, including Green Theory, for allegedly violating federal law. Although Green Theory complied with local D.C. regulations, Martin cited a federal law that bans cannabis outlets within 1,000 feet of schools—claiming the dispensary fell within that boundary.

Martin’s enforcement philosophy focused on selective federal prosecution of dispensaries not fully aligned with local and federal statutes. In public comments, he stated that licensed operators must be fully compliant or risk legal action, even though he admitted that shutting down such operations wasn’t his top priority.

CBD Support But No Endorsement for Full Legalization

Despite Pirro's involvement with the CBD industry, she has publicly stated that she views medical marijuana as distinct from full cannabis legalization. Her past social media commentary and interviews reflect a clear boundary in her support: she may endorse wellness products derived from hemp, but she has not advocated ending prohibition of recreational marijuana.

This nuanced position aligns with the Trump administration's complex and often conflicting cannabis stance. While President Trump signed the 2018 Farm Bill legalizing hemp and its derivatives, he also maintained a federal rider that blocked legal cannabis sales in D.C. during his term. Pirro's views appear to echo this fragmented approach, supporting specific aspects of cannabis reform while opposing full legalization.

White House Criticism of D.C. Decriminalization Complicates the Policy Landscape

The Trump administration has criticized several of Washington, D.C.'s progressive policies, including marijuana decriminalization. In a March fact sheet tied to an executive order focused on public safety and urban cleanliness, the White House cited cannabis policy as one example of what it called the District's "failed" governance.

Though the executive order did not directly reference marijuana, it laid the groundwork for increased federal law enforcement in D.C., including for issues like drug possession and sales. This administrative stance creates further tension between local reform efforts and federal oversight—a conflict Pirro may now play a central role in navigating.

District of Columbia's Cannabis Policy Stuck Between Local Will and Federal Control

D.C. residents voted to legalize possession and personal cultivation of cannabis for recreational use, but a long-standing federal spending rider has blocked the District from creating a regulated commercial market. Trump and Biden alike supported keeping this ban in their budgets, frustrating local leaders and reform advocates.

Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) has vowed to continue pushing for the removal of this rider, calling out repeated attempts by Republican colleagues to interfere in D.C.'s self-governance and cannabis legislation. The appointment of a federal prosecutor with cannabis industry ties could influence how rigorously these policies are enforced at the federal level.

Implications of Pirro's Appointment for the Future of Cannabis Enforcement in the Nation's Capital

With Pirro stepping in as acting U.S. attorney, there may be a shift in how aggressively federal cannabis laws are enforced in Washington, D.C., especially with regard to dispensaries and CBD businesses operating within local legal frameworks. While she is unlikely to become a vocal advocate for full legalization, her affiliation with the CBD sector suggests a more tolerant attitude toward non-intoxicating cannabis-derived products.

Still, her long-standing conservative credentials and controversial media presence could bring a different set of challenges. Advocates and critics alike will closely watch how Pirro handles cannabis enforcement in a city at the center of America's drug policy debate.

A Telling Appointment in a Pivotal Cannabis Moment

President Trump's decision to install Jeanine Pirro—amid her past suspension from Fox News and her entrance into the CBD business—sends mixed signals about the federal government's stance on cannabis. It underscores the ongoing tension between personal industry interest and public policy, and it reflects the broader national ambivalence surrounding cannabis reform.

Whether Pirro will change the trajectory of federal enforcement in D.C. remains to be seen, but her appointment certainly adds a new, complex dimension to an already nuanced and contested issue.

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