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- 210 WATERLOO BUILDING
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- 307 FEDERAL BUILDING
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United States Senate

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1501

June 30, 2006

Mr. Carl E. Olsen
130 NE Aurora Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50313

Dear Mr. Olsen:

Thank you for your further correspondence. As your Senator, it's important that I hear from you.

While I believe Mr. Walters has made a number of questionable decisions during his tenure as Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, I wish to be clear that my comments were in no way intended to imply that drugs other than meth, such as marijuana, should not be considered a major problem in America. While it is true that meth has devastated much of the country, marijuana will continue to remain a serious concern.

Thank you again for contacting me. While I always appreciate hearing your thoughts, this is obviously an area in which we will continue to disagree. As the debate continues, I will keep your opinions in mind.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator

CEG/jj

CHAIRMAN,
FINANCE

Committee Assignments:

BUDGET
JUDICIARY
AGRICULTURE

CHAIRMAN,
INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS
CONTROL CAUCUS

Carl E. Olsen
130 E Aurora Ave
Des Moines, Iowa 50313-3654

July 21, 2006

Charles Grassley
United States Senator
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-1501

Dear Senator Grassley,

Thank you for responding to my letter regarding your comments on Mr. John Walters, the Director of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP hereinafter). The emphasis placed on marijuana by Mr. Walters is extremely misdirected. The federal drug law, the Controlled Substances Act of 1970 (CSA hereinafter), requires the Attorney General, who has delegate the authority to the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA hereinafter), to review the scheduling of controlled Substances.

The last time the DEA held a scheduling hearing on marijuana, the DEA chief administrative law judge held that, "There is no record in the extensive medical literature describing a proven, documented cannabis-induced fatality." DEA Docket No. 86-22, Sept. 6, 1988, at page 56. "A smoker would theoretically have to consume nearly 1,500 pounds of marijuana within about 15 minutes to induce a lethal response." *Ibid.* at 57. "In practical terms, marijuana cannot induce a lethal response as a result of drug-related toxicity." *Ibid.* at 57. The judge went on to say that eating marijuana is safer than eating raw potatoes or aspirin, and "it is physically impossible to eat enough marijuana to induce death." *Ibid.* at 58. "Marijuana, in its natural form, is one of the safest therapeutically active substances known to man." *Ibid.* at 58-59.

Something is definitely wrong with federal drug policy. It's my understanding that the principle ingredient in methamphetamine is pseudoephedrine. It's also my understanding that "ephedra" is a plant that the federal Food and Drug Administration tried unsuccessfully to regulate. Apparently, the danger of using the plant wasn't sufficient to justify making it illegal. On the other hand, you have the principle ingredient in marijuana, THC, moved from Schedule I to Schedule II by the DEA on May 13, 1986: 51 Fed. Reg. 17,476, and subsequently moved again from Schedule II to Schedule III by the DEA in 1999, 64 Fed. Reg. 35928.

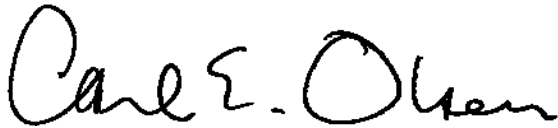
I have two letters from the State of Iowa, dated June 2, 1995 and August 16, 1996, that say two Iowans are allowed to use marijuana on state property because they are authorized to use marijuana by the federal government as well as the Iowa Board of Pharmacy Examiners. The federal government has been supplying both of these two

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Carl E. Olsen

Iowans with 300 rolled marijuana cigarettes per month for over 15 years now, with no threat to public health and safety being reported in all that time.

In addition, the federal government allows people to use peyote and hoasca for religious purposes and both of these substances are in Schedule I of the federal CSA. Both of which are powerful hallucinogens containing alkaloids which can cause immediate death. I am a member of the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church which uses marijuana as a sacrament, and yet the federal government has denied me an exemption from the federal CSA for my sacramental use of marijuana. Where is the threat to public health and safety sufficient to deny me the right to practice my religion?

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carl E. Olsen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C' and 'O'.

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United States Senate

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1501

August 30, 2006

REPLY TO:

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COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA 51501-4204
(712) 322-7103

Mr. Carl E. Olsen
130 NE Aurora Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50313

Dear Mr. Olsen:

Thank you for your continued correspondence on marijuana. I always enjoy hearing from people back home.

While I appreciate hearing your thoughts, it is clear that this is an issue we will continue to disagree on. With that said, I hope that you will continue to write and call on me regarding this or any other federal issues that are of concern to you.

Again, I appreciate you taking the time to share your opinions with me. I look forward to hearing from you in the future.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator

CEG/jj

CHAIRMAN,
FINANCE

Committee Assignments:

BUDGET
JUDICIARY
AGRICULTURE

CHAIRMAN,
INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS
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Carl E. Olsen
130 E Aurora Ave
Des Moines, Iowa 50313-3654

September 22, 2006

Charles Grassley
United States Senator
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-1501

Dear Senator Grassley,

I am a member of the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church. In 1979, the Florida Supreme Court said, “the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church is not a new church or religion but the record reflects it is centuries old and has regularly used cannabis as its sacrament.” *Town v. State, ex rel. Reno*, 377 So.2d 648 (Fla. 1979), at page 649. The Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church has been incorporated in the State of Iowa continuously since 1987.

In 1990, the U.S. Supreme Court issued the landmark decision in *Employment Division v. Smith*, 494 U.S. 872 (1990), finding that the use of sacramental plants prohibited by the federal Controlled Substances Act of 1970 was not protected by the Constitution of the United States. A week after the decision in *Employment Division v. Smith*, the U.S. Supreme Court dismissed a petition for sacramental use of marijuana by the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church, *Carl E. Olsen v. Drug Enforcement Administration*, 495 U.S. 906 (1990). The ruling in *Employment Division v. Smith* reversed previous U.S. Supreme Court precedent set in *Sherbert v. Verner*, 374 U.S. 398 (1963) and *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 U.S. 205 (1972), and Congress responded by unanimously passing the *Religious Freedom Restoration Act* of 1993, 107 Stat. 1488 Public Law 103-141 (Nov. 16, 1993), 42 U.S.C. 2000bb.

When the U.S. Supreme Court then issued the decision in *Boerne v. Flores*, 521 U.S. 507 (1997), finding that the *Religious Freedom Restoration Act* does not apply to state regulations of general nature. Congress responded by passing the *Religious Land Use and Incarcerated Persons Act* of 2000, 114 Stat. 803, Public Law 106-274 (Sept. 22, 2000), 42 U.S.C. 2000cc.

In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court has issued a decision upholding both the *Religious Freedom Restoration Act* and the *Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act* as being valid applications of federal law to the states as well as the federal government, in *Cutter v. Wilkinson*, 544 U.S. 709 (2005).

In 2006, the U.S. Supreme Court further recognized the sacramental use of plants prohibited by the federal Controlled Substances Act of 1970 in *Gonzales v. O Centro Espirita Beneficente Uniao do Vegetal*, 126 S. Ct. 1211, 163 L. Ed. 2d 1017 (2006).


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Carl E. Olsen

Since the ruling in *Employment Division v. Smith*, I have been forced to abandon worship at the point of a gun. It now appears that the U.S. Supreme Court recognizes the injustice and that my rights to worship have been restored.

As my United States Senator, I am requesting that you request an opinion from the Attorney General of the United States regarding my right to practice my religion in light of the *Religious Freedom Restoration Act* and the *Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act*.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carl E. Olsen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and "O".