

Important Legal Information for The Mothership Sanctuary Members and Officers of the Courts of the United States

Supremacy Clause Overview: The U.S. Constitution's Supremacy Clause in Article VI establishes that federal law takes precedence over state laws. When there is a conflict between federal and state law, federal law prevails.

1. How It Works:

- **Supremacy Clause:** This clause asserts that the Constitution, federal laws, and treaties are the supreme law of the land, superseding conflicting state laws.
- **Preemption:**
 - **Express Preemption:** Federal law explicitly states it overrides state law.
 - **Implied Preemption:** The conflict between federal and state law is so significant that state law must yield.

2. Constitutional Limits:

- Federal laws must adhere to the limits of the Constitution. If a federal law exceeds its constitutional powers, it can be challenged.

Examples and Precedent: If a state law permits something that federal law prohibits, federal law prevails. States can enact laws in areas not covered by federal law, provided they don't conflict with federal regulations.

Key Supreme Court Cases on Federal Supremacy:

- **McCulloch v. Maryland (1819):** States cannot interfere with federal activities, emphasizing federal law supremacy.
- **Gibbons v. Ogden (1824):** Affirmed federal authority over interstate commerce.
- **Cooper v. Aaron (1958):** State officials must enforce Supreme Court decisions, underscoring the binding nature of federal rulings.
- **Arizona v. United States (2012):** Federal law preempted state immigration enforcement efforts, reinforcing federal authority.

Violations of Federal Rights:

- **Police Officers:** Must respect constitutional rights like the Fourth, Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendments. Violations can lead to suppression of evidence, civil lawsuits (42 U.S.C. § 1983), or criminal charges.
- **Officers of the Court:** Judges and prosecutors have similar duties to uphold constitutional rights. Violations can lead to appeals, disciplinary actions, or lawsuits.

Legal Remedies:

- Victims of rights violations can seek redress through civil lawsuits, complaints to internal affairs, or bar associations.

- **Qualified Immunity:** Government officials are protected from lawsuits unless they violate clearly established rights.

Notable Cases:

- **Mapp v. Ohio (1961):** Established the exclusionary rule, preventing the use of illegally obtained evidence.
- **Miranda v. Arizona (1966):** Instituted "Miranda rights," protecting against self-incrimination.
- **Terry v. Ohio (1968):** Defined standards for stop-and-frisk based on reasonable suspicion.
- **Tennessee v. Garner (1985):** Restricted police use of deadly force against fleeing suspects.

Supreme Court Decisions on Religious Rights:

- **Murdock v. Pennsylvania:** Found that requiring a license and fee for distributing religious materials burdens First Amendment rights.
- **Shuttlesworth v. City of Birmingham:** Struck down an ordinance granting officials too much discretion in issuing permits, reinforcing the need for clear standards.

Religious Sacraments and Controlled Substances:

- **Employment Division v. Smith (1990):** Ruled that neutral laws of general applicability do not violate the Free Exercise Clause, leading to the RFRA's enactment.
- **Gonzales v. O Centro Espirita Beneficente Uniao do Vegetal (2006):** Held that the government must justify any burden on religious practices under the RFRA with a compelling interest and the least restrictive means.
- **Church of the Holy Light of the Queen v. Mukasey (2008):** Reaffirmed religious protections under the RFRA for the use of ayahuasca.
- **United States v. Boyll (1991):** Extended protections for the religious use of peyote to all members of the Native American Church.

Cases Involving Religious Use of Cannabis and Psilocybin:

- **United States v. UDV-USA (2005):** Protected UDV's use of hoasca tea under the RFRA.
- **Oklevueha Native American Church of Hawaii, Inc. v. Holder (2014):** Highlighted the challenge of proving the necessity of religious cannabis use under the RFRA.
- **Church of the Holy Light of the Queen v. Mukasey (2008):** Strengthened the precedent for religious use of ayahuasca under the RFRA.

Territorial Context: People v. Guerrero (2000):

- **Guam as a U.S. Territory:** While not a state, Guam is subject to federal laws.

- **Case Summary:** Benny Toves Guerrero, a Rastafarian, was arrested in Guam for importing marijuana as a sacrament. He argued that this violated his religious rights under the Organic Act of Guam and the First Amendment.
- **Ruling:** The court held that the RFRA applies to Guam, as an instrumentality of the federal government, and found that the government failed to justify the restriction on Guerrero's religious practice.

This information outlines the legal principles of federal supremacy, key legal precedents, and the intersection of religious freedom and controlled substances, emphasizing the need for clear evidence and justification when the government restricts religious practices.