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POLITICS

House Rejects AOC Amendment To Research Into Psychedelics' Medical Benefits



Published 18 hours ago on July 27, 2021

By **Kyle Jaeger** 



- f The U.S. House of Representatives rejected an amendment on Tuesday that was designed to free up research into the therapeutic potential of psychedelics. The body also addressed several other amendments related to cannabis.
- ✈
- ✉ Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) [filed the psychedelics measure](#), which would repeal a 1990s-era provision that's long been part of spending legislation for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The congresswoman attempted to eliminate the language in the amendment in 2019 only to have it [defeated by Republicans as well as a majority of her party members](#) in a resounding vote of 91-331.



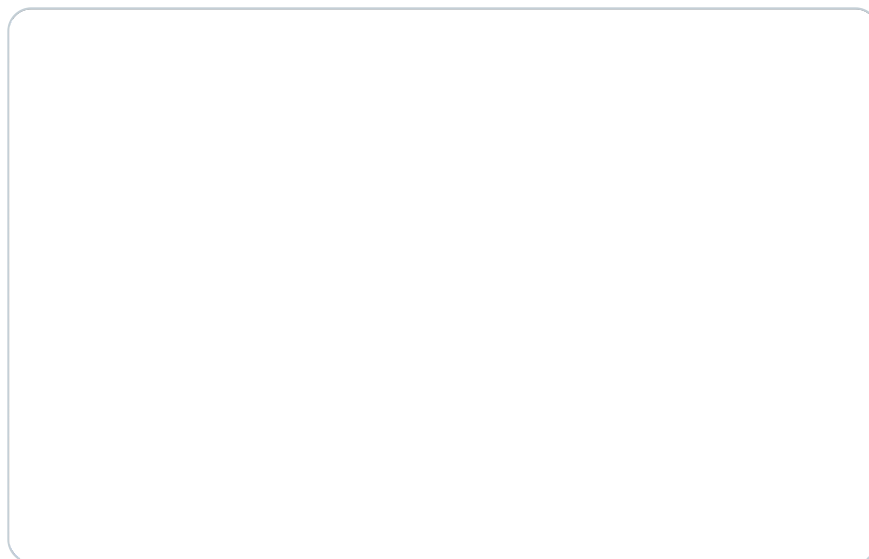
Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez 

@RepAOC



Our amendment allows research on whether Schedule I drugs can treat disease. MDMA helps some vets with PTSD. Ibogaine may treat opioid addiction. Marijuana helps cancer & epilepsy patients. But these treatments aren't available

b/c related medical research is effectively banned.



4:37 PM · Jul 27, 2021



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This time around—amid a growing national movement to reform laws around psye the chamber rejected it with a narrower 140-285 tally for inclusion as part of a large-funding package covering multiple federal agencies.

Most Democrats supported the reform in the most recent vote, but enough still sided vast majority of Republicans to defeat it.

“The United States has and continues to uphold an obsolete provision from the war c Ocasio-Cortez said on the floor before the vote. “This provision specifically has for a period of time presented and acted as a barricade to federal research on certain subst psilocybin, MDMA and marijuana—and allowing us to research the potential therape applications of these drugs in the treatment of diseases such as PTSD, addiction and depression. We are long overdue.”

12:12


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Rep. Lou Correa (D-CA) also spoke in support of expanding psychedelic research, saying that these substances can “help veterans deal with those invisible wounds that they bring back from the battlefield—PTSD and other mental issues that they bring back with them and carry on a day to day basis.”

The House also acted on a series of other amendments concerning cannabis on Tuesday, after the House Rules Committee had made in order for floor consideration earlier this week.

For example, a pro-reform proposal that advanced encourages the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to enact rules allowing CBD as a dietary supplement and food ingredient. Filed by Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-OR), and approved in a voice vote as part of a larger bill package with other amendments, it encourages FDA to create a regulatory pathway for CBD “no later than 180 days after enactment.”



Rep. Kurt Schrader  @RepSchrader · Jul 27, 2021 

I am proud to announce my amendment to the FY22 appropriation package urging the @US_FDA to allow #CBD and other hemp-derived products to lawfully be used in dietary supplements and food passed the House tonight. This is great news for Oregon farmers!



In a House floor speech, Schrader said hemp businesses face “economic burdens from regulatory uncertainty caused by lack of action” from FDA.

“The livelihoods of hemp farmers and safety of consumers across the country reside in the hands of the agency,” he said.

—
Marijuana Moment is already tracking more than 1,100 cannabis, psychedelics drug policy bills in state legislatures and Congress this year. Patreon supporters pledging at least \$25/month get access to our interactive maps, charts and hearing calendar so they don't miss any developments.

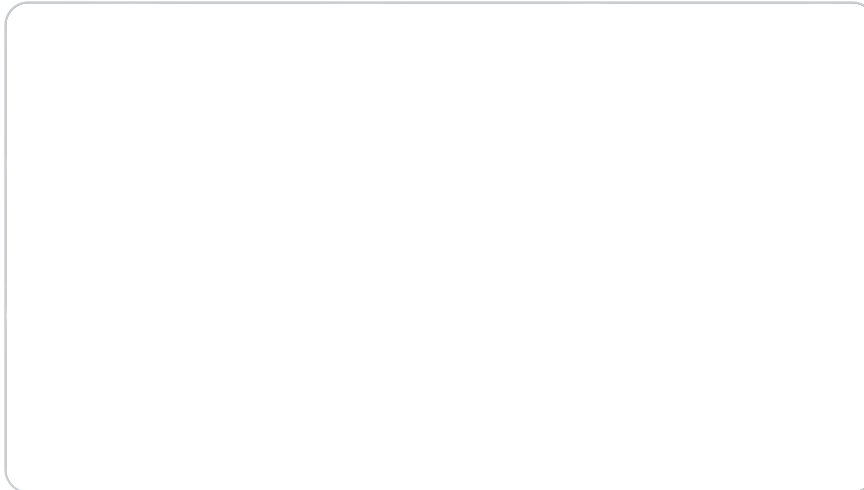
Learn more about our [marijuana bill tracker](#) and become a [supporter on Patreon](#) for [exclusive access](#).

Lawmakers defeated a proposal from Rep. Debbie Lesko (R-AZ) to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) appropriations bill to eliminate a rider that’s curbing the legislation that “allows federal funding to go to institutions of higher education that are conducting research on marijuana.”

That measure generated significant pushback given that research into cannabis is an overwhelmingly bipartisan issue, and top federal drug officials have repeatedly urged to support policies that make it easier to study the risks and benefits of the plant. What’s more, Lesko represents a state with adult-use legalization on the books.

The congresswoman argued in a House floor speech before the vote that not passing the amendment would “permit universities to offer a class called ‘Pot Smoking 101’ [that is] dedicated to smoking pot under the false pretense of research.”

WATCH my remarks on my amendment



6:56 PM · Jul 27, 2021



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But House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) said removing current marijuana protections for universities in the bill could hamper studies.

“Without such research, there would be limited scientific discovery and breakthrough to shape our daily lives,” she said. “Evidence-based research regarding cannabis ought to be encouraged in academic settings, not discouraged, and we should ensure that we broaden our understanding of marijuana, not limit it.”

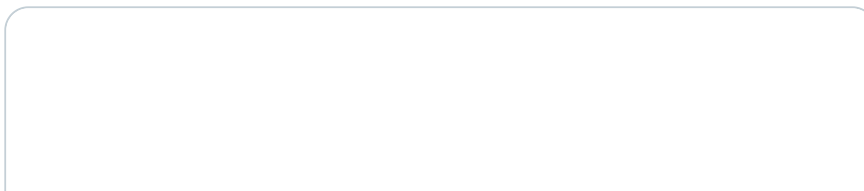


Angie Craig ✓
@RepAngieCraig



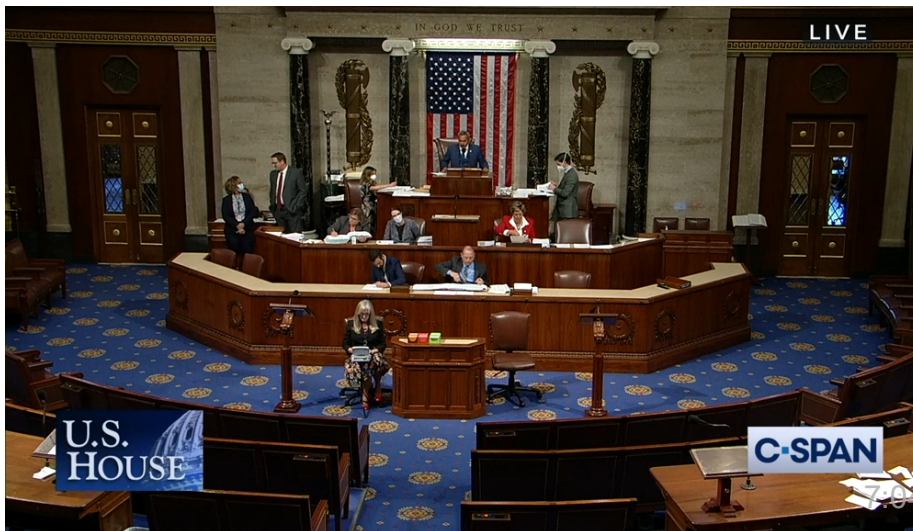
I just voted against an amendment that would have denied funding to universities that conduct research on marijuana.

We should be responsibly exploring the medical benefits of marijuana, not continuing to fight an outdated War on Drugs.





Lesko’s amendment was rejected, with 147 votes in favor and 276 against.



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Another amendment, which was rejected in a different en bloc package with other provisions would have transferred “\$25 million from the Environmental Programs and Management enforcement activities account to the National Forest System account for enforcement remediation of illegal marijuana trespass grow sites on federal lands and for the cleanup of toxic waste and chemicals at these sites,” according to a description.

That measure was filed by Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-CA), who recently released video of [driving a bulldozer of cannabis plants](#).

Two marijuana reform amendments from Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) that legalization advocates hoped to see advance were blocked from floor consideration by the Rules Committee on Monday.

Her proposals—which were aimed at appropriations legislation for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)—would have made it so marijuana possession or consumption [could not be used as the sole basis for denying people access to public housing](#). One amendment was narrowly focused on medical cannabis while a second measure would have covered all marijuana use that's legal under state laws.

Members filed these proposed revisions as part of the appropriations minibus bill for fiscal year 2022 to fund the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Agriculture, Rural Development, Energy and Water Development, Financial Services and General Government, Interior, Environment, Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development.

The spending package as introduced would also allow Washington, D.C. to use its local dollars to implement a system of lawful marijuana sales for adults.

That stands in contrast to a [budget proposal from President Joe Biden](#), whose administration is seeking to keep language protecting medical cannabis states from federal intervention. The proposal has excluded the provision on giving D.C. autonomy to legalize marijuana commerce.

Another provision that was included as part of the Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) spending bill would [protect banks that work with marijuana businesses](#). Further, a committee report attached to that legislation encourages federal government agencies to [reconsider policies that fire employees for using marijuana](#) in compliance with state laws.

Federal health agencies should [pursue research into the therapeutic potential of psychedelics](#) for military veterans suffering from a host of mental health conditions, a report attached to separate spending legislation that's part of the minibus package says.

Report language also directs the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to improve communication on veteran eligibility for home loans and report back to Congress on

progress within 180 days of the enactment of the legislation. A separate provision would expand research on the medical benefits of cannabis for veterans.

In the report for Agriculture Department funding, lawmakers took issue with the 2018 Farm Bill's 0.3 percent THC cap for lawful hemp products and directed USDA to work with the DEA on a study of whether that threshold is scientifically backed. That report also addressed numerous other issues related to the crop.

Other report language attached to this spending package highlights the difficulty of scheduling Schedule I drugs like marijuana, recognizes the medical potential of cannabinoids like kratom and encourages federal agencies not to restrict the plant kratom and acknowledges the limited value of syringe access programs and safe consumption sites for illegal drugs.

The appropriations process this session has seen numerous drug policy reform provisions included in bill text and attached reports—also stopping immigrants from deported for cannabis, for example, among other issues.

A bipartisan group of congressional lawmakers recently circulated a letter to build support for an amendment to a separate Department of Justice spending bill that would protect and tribal marijuana programs from federal interference—going beyond the existing provision that shields only medical cannabis states that's currently enacted into law. There are cosponsors signed on to the broader proposal, which is being considered by the Rules Committee and may see floor action this week.

The Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) spending report also notes that the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has moved to approve additional marijuana manufacturers for research purposes and says the committee supports ongoing research efforts on cannabis, particularly in the wake of an outbreak of lung injuries associated with unregulated vaping products.

The bill was up for Rules Committee consideration on Tuesday, but the panel delayed decisions on amendments until Wednesday morning.

A provision was also attached to the bill that would make states and localities ineligible for certain federal law enforcement grants if they maintain a policy allowing for no-knock warrants for drug-related cases. That policy garnered national attention following the killing of Breonna Taylor, who was fatally shot by law enforcement during a botched raid.

Ohio Marijuana Activists Launch Ballot Campaign To Push Lawmakers To Enact Legalization

Ohio marijuana activists have a new plan to legalize cannabis in the state as lawmakers pursue separate reform legislation. Voters rejected a 2015 legalization initiative, and advocates suspended a campaign to place another measure on the 2020 ballot due to the coronavirus pandemic. But on Tuesday, the Coalition to Regulate Marijuana Like Alcohol (CTRMLA) launched ... Continue reading



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Kyle Jaeger



Kyle Jaeger is Marijuana Moment's Sacramento-based senior editor. His work has also appeared in High VICE and attn.

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Colorado Governor Announces New



Congress rejects AOC's psychedelics amendment but adopts CBD one (Newsletter: July 28, 2021)



Analysis: House Vote On /



Ohio Marijuana Activists | Ballot Campaign To Push To Enact Legalization

BUSINESS

Florida Regulators Blast Oregon Hemp Products And Encourage Consumers To Buy Local In New Alert



Published 24 mins ago on July 28, 2021

By Kyle Jaeger



Florida regulators are calling out Oregon hemp businesses over products that they say contain rocks and sticks and have failed to meet regulatory guidelines on allowable THC content. Instead, consumers should buy local products made in Florida, officials say.

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) recently released a consumer alert to warn Floridians about complaints it has received concerning poor quality hemp items from Oregon. Separate new guidance was issued on the cannabinoid delta-8 THC, a psychoactive compound that is increasingly being marketed and catching the attention of regulators.

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POLITICS

Colorado Governor Announces New Cannabis Business Office With Focus On Social Equ



Published 3 hours ago on July 28, 2021

By **Kyle Jaeger** 



Colorado officials on Wednesday announced the launch of a new office to provide economic support for the state's marijuana industry.

The Cannabis Business Office (CBO) “shows our administration’s focus on growing this thriving industry that supports jobs and our economy,” Gov. Jared Polis (D) said in a press release.

The division, which was created as part of a [bill](#) signed into law in March, is [being funded](#) [through tax revenue](#). It will focus on creating “new economic development opportunities

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POLITICS

Analysis: House Vote On AOC’s Psychedel Research Amendment Shows Rising Supp Despite Defeat



Published 4 hours ago on July 28, 2021

By **Kyle Jaeger** [Twitter](#)



The U.S. House of Representatives on Tuesday again defeated a spending bill amendment meant to promote research into the medical benefits of psychedelics like psilocybin and MDMA. But it picked up about 50 “yes” votes since it was last considered in 2019, signaling that Congress may be coming around on the issue as psychedelics reform advances at the state and local levels—similar to how support for marijuana law reform has increased over time

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) sponsored the amendment, with the hopes of attaching it to a wide-ranging appropriations bill. But it failed in a 140-285 vote. That’s a notably smaller margin compared to two years ago, when the proposal was rejected by a vote of 91-731

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