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POLITICS

Psychedelics Decriminalization Advancing In Three More Cities, Spanning From Coast To Coast



Published 2 weeks ago on August 3, 2021

By **Kyle Jaeger**



From Massachusetts to California, advocates are actively making new strides to local laws governing psychedelics like psilocybin and ayahuasca—building on a movement that has already seen numerous cities decriminalize entheogenic substances.



The momentum of the psychedelics decriminalization movement is abundantly clear when one considers the geopolitical landscape that's being targeted by activists associated with Decriminalize Nature of late. The latest cities where the reform is generating steam are Easthampton, Massachusetts; Grand Rapids, Michigan and Berkeley, California.

Here's a breakdown of where the efforts stand in each city:

Easthampton

The Easthampton City Council is exploring a resolution to decriminalize a wide range of entheogenic substances. Passing the measure would mean that Easthampton would be the fourth city in Massachusetts to enact the reform.

Councilors Owen Zaret, Thomas Peake and Salem Derby are sponsoring the resc which seeks to make enforcement of laws against certain psychedelics among th lowest priorities. Advocates with Bay Staters for Natural Medicine have helped s the effort.



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Easthampton, Massachusetts

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Easthampton friends, we need your help

Our resolution ending possession arrests for controlled substances and allowing people to access and use plant medicine will soon come to a vote 🍄🌿

As the Daily Gazette's "Those Left Behind" series shows us (link in bio), losing a loved one to opioid overdose is an experience no family should go through. By arresting people instead of prioritizing

...is an experience we really should go through by arresting people instead of providing access to treatment and stigmatizing plant medicines that could help, we are failing people we love

Use of psilocybin mushrooms is associated with a 40% reduced risk of opioid abuse, helping people process both the trauma and chemic dependency behind addiction (Journal of Psychopharmacology, 2017).

Ibogaine, a West African plant, has been shown in clinical trials to achieve sustained reduced use of opioids (American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, 2018)

If you're from Easthampton or know someone from Easthampton, please share this easy email too with them to contact the city council: tinyurl.com/easthamptonemails

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[#addiction](#) [#overdose](#) [#ibogaine](#) [#psilocybin](#) [#psychedelics](#) [#warondrugs](#) [#plantmedicine](#)

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“This is an opportunity to be forward-thinking and make a statement to undo the harm done by criminalizing plants that have clear therapeutic properties,” Zaret press release. “People should not be arrested or incarcerated for essentially using medicine. This lays a path towards legislation that allows for de-scheduling these and creating a reasonable and safe regulatory framework for entheogenic therapies of the reach of Big Pharma.”

Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) is also supporting the reform, and advocates have already met with local police officials to discuss the issue.

“Many officers know arrests can make people suffering substance use disorder even worse off,” James Davis, a volunteer for Bay Staters for Natural Medicine, said. “I’m grateful to first-responders having tough conversations in their own departments about how to treat people with humanity—possession arrests lose people their jobs, their homes, lose them access to benefits, and often makes fentanyl access easier in jail and prisons.”

Other Massachusetts cities that have enacted the policy change are:

[Northampton](#), [Somerville](#) and [Cambridge](#).

Last week, state lawmakers [also heard testimony about a bill](#) to create a task force charged with [studying the implications of legalizing psychedelics like psilocybin and ayahuasca](#).

Grand Rapids

In Grand Rapids, a local lawmaker who is advising the city's chapter of Decrimir Nature recently said that he feels there's enough support to advance a psychede decriminalization resolution.

"In terms of my discussions with my colleagues, they're all very open minded to all have a lot of questions," City Commissioner Kurt Reppart to MLive. "Several have expressed explicit support. I believe we have enough support to pass a resc

He said the measure could go to a vote by the end of the year, though no actions currently scheduled. City attorneys are currently reviewing the proposed langua which point it would be sent to the city commission's Legislative Committee to whether the body should approve or reject it.

"The best case scenario for me is that during the fall it would come up and it wo with a resounding vote," he said." I don't know if it would be unanimous, but it a strong vote."

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DNGR is attending the GR City Commission meeting on Tuesday, July 13. Join us!



We will meet at Calder Plaza beginning at 6p and walk to the city commission meeting together at 6:45p

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Learn more and RSVP via the events link in our bio!

You will have the opportunity to speak at the city commission meeting for

As with most Decriminalize Nature proposals, the one being planned would not the psychedelics, but simple possession and cultivation offenses involving the substances would be deprioritized for law enforcement.

If approved, this would be the second Michigan city to pass psychedelics decriminalization, following the Ann Arbor City Council's unanimous vote to pass a similar resolution last year.

“Decriminalizing things that are not harming anyone ought to be the first thing take away from law enforcement and say, ‘You know what, we’ve been asking you that. You no longer have to go to those places where you don’t have the training expertise and it’s always uncomfortable,’” Reppart.

Arcata

In Arcata, the City Council’s Public Safety Committee recently advanced a psychedelics reform resolution led by Decriminalize Nature Humboldt. The panel revised it to update the policies on deprioritizing enforcement to use and possession in private spaces. Committee members also urged the inclusion of an educational campaign on the issue.

This action came after the full body ended up split on the proposal during earlier consideration. But the committee’s passage of the measure means it will be returned to the full Council.

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A huge thank you to The Arcata Public Safety Committee for hearing the important issue to decriminalize entheogens in our city! There was a 3 yay

“The city has the power to prioritize where law enforcement goes and then where resources go for that,” Larry Norris, co-founder of Decriminalize Nature, [said](#) in testimony, according to The Times-Standard. “It doesn’t change the law. There changes to municipal code, but [decriminalization] really allows for the city to s plants and mushrooms aren’t really a big priority for us, we have other things go

Councilmember Sarah Schaefer agreed to lead the resolution, which would make enforcement of laws against entheogenic substances like psilocybin and ibogain

the city's lowest law enforcement priorities.

**Decriminalize Nature**
about a month ago



Congrats to the Arcata community!

Last night the [#DecriminalizeNature](#) resolution moved on to the Public Safety Committee!


Thank you to the incredible Arcata community for sharing your powerful and inspiring testimony and for the hard work and effort of the DecriminalizeNature Humboldt team


BREAKING NEWS!

Congrats to the Arcata community!

DN resolution moves on to the Public Safety Committee!


Thank you to all for sharing your powerful and inspiring testimony

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City Council Meeting, July 21, 2021

Business, C. Request from Decriminalize Nature Humboldt



City Council Meeting, July 21, 2021

Business, C. Request from Decriminalize Nature Humboldt

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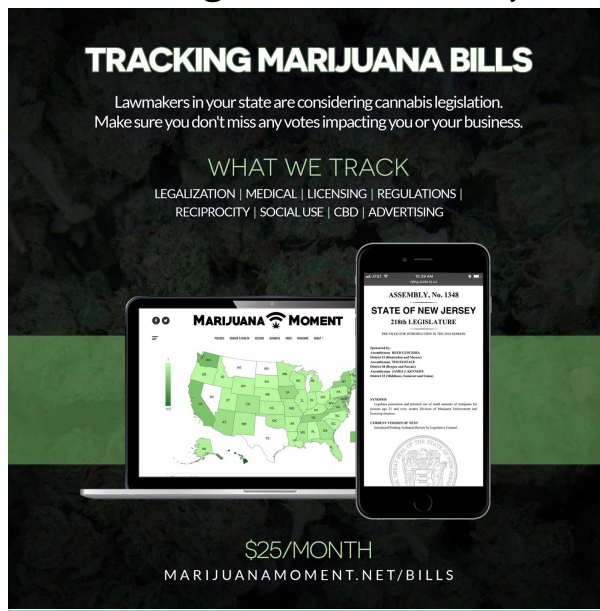
Danielle Daniel, lead organizer of Decriminalize Nature Humboldt, told Marijuana Moment that she has “so much gratitude for the Arcata Public Safety Committee’s openness to understanding the healing potential of entheogenic plants and fungi, and the importance of decriminalization for our community.”

“With Decriminalize Nature Humboldt’s dedication to educating our community on entheogens, and how to take them in a therapeutic way, we hope to dispel any confusion or fear about decriminalization in Arcata,” she said.

In California, [Oakland](#) and [Santa Cruz](#) have already enacted psychedelics decriminalization.

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Marijuana Moment is already [tracking more than 1,200 cannabis, psychedelics and drug policy bills](#) in state legislatures and Congress this year. [Patreon supporters](#) pledging at least \$25/month get access to our interactive maps and hearing calendar so they don’t miss any developments.



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

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Here’s more context on the psychedelics reform movement:

For the most part, the burgeoning psychedelics movement has been limited to decriminalization—with the exception of Oregon, where voters elected to [legalize psilocybin for therapeutic purposes](#) during last year’s election. California activists also pushing to place [psilocybin legalization on the state’s 2022 ballot](#) as a lawnm works to pass a separate bill to [legalize possession of a wide range of psychedelics](#) has already passed the state Senate and two Assembly committees.

The latest developments in Easthampton, Grand Rapids and Arcata are some of iterations of a national psychedelics reform movement that's spread since Denver became the first city to decriminalize psilocybin mushrooms in 2019.

The governor of Connecticut signed legislation recently that includes language for the state to carry out a study into the therapeutic potential of psilocybin mushrooms.

Texas also recently enacted a bill to require the state study the medical benefits of psychedelics for military veterans.

A New York lawmaker introduced a bill in June that would require the state to establish an institute to similarly research the medical value of psychedelics.

In Oakland, the first city where a city council voted to broadly deprioritize criminalization of entheogenic substances, lawmakers approved a follow-up resolution in December that calls for the policy change to be adopted statewide and for local jurisdictions to be allowed to permit healing ceremonies where people could use psychedelics.

After Ann Arbor legislators passed a decriminalization resolution last year, a county prosecutor recently announced that his office will not be pursuing charges over possessing entheogenic plants and fungi—"regardless of the amount at issue."

The Aspen, Colorado City Council discussed the therapeutic potential of psychedelics like psilocybin and proposals to decriminalize such substances at a meeting in May. But members said, as it stands, enacting a reform would be more better at the state level while entheogens remain strictly federally controlled.

Seattle lawmakers also recently sent a letter to members of a local task force focused on the opioid overdose epidemic, imploring the group to investigate the therapeutic potential of psychedelics like ayahuasca and ibogaine in curbing addiction.

The psychedelics conversation is also catching on at the federal level.

But in a setback for advocates, the U.S. House of Representatives last week voted against a proposal from Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) that would have removed a spending bill rider that advocates say has restricted federal funds for research in

Schedule I drugs, including psychedelics such as psilocybin, MDMA and ibogaine. However, it picked up considerably more votes this round than [when the congress first introduced it](#) in 2019.

Report provisions of separate, House-passed spending legislation also touch on to [expand cannabis and psychedelics research](#). The panel urged the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to support expanded marijuana studies, for example

It further says that federal health agencies should [pursue research into the therapeutic potential of psychedelics](#) for military veterans suffering from a host of mental health conditions.

When it comes to broader drug policy reform, Oregon voters also approved an initiative in November to [decriminalize possession of all drugs](#). This year, the Maine House of Representatives [passed a drug decriminalization bill](#), but it later [died in the Senate](#).

In May, lawmakers in Congress filed the [first-ever legislation to federally decriminalize possession](#) of illicit substances.

Wyoming Marijuana Decriminalization And Medical Cannabis Initiatives Clear First 2022 Ballot Hurdle

A pair of Wyoming marijuana reform initiatives have cleared an initial hurdle on the path to qualifying for the state's 2022 ballot. Activists are seeking to put separate measures to legalize medical cannabis and decriminalize adult-use marijuana before voters next year—and the secretary of state's office on Friday approved the latest version of their proposed ... [Continue reading](#)



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Photo courtesy of [Wikimedia/Workman](#).

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Kyle Jaeger



Kyle Jaeger is Marijuana Moment's Sacramento-based senior editor. His work has also appeared in the New York Times, VICE and attn.

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California Bill To Legalize Possession Of Psychedelics Faces Another Hurdle But Faces Challenge Next Week

POLITICS

New Jersey Regulators Approve Rules For Adult-Use Marijuana Market Nearly On Year After Legalization Vote



Published 4 hours ago on August 19, 2021

By **Kyle Jaeger** 



It's been nearly a year since New Jersey voters passed a referendum to legalize marijuana—and on Thursday, regulators approved initial rules for the program that will set up state's retail market.

The New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission (NJCRC) has been taking public testimony for months on proposed rules, with advocates pushing for equity and inclusivity, and industry stakeholders pushing for policies that don't place undue burdens on businesses as the market matures.

The board, which met for a public session on Thursday, has been reviewing the

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BUSINESS

Rosario Dawson Joins Board Of Marijuana Business As Partner Cory Booker Push For Legalization In Senate



Published 5 hours ago on August 19, 2021

By **Kyle Jaeger** 



Actress Rosario Dawson is joining the board of a California-based marijuana beverage company as her partner, Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ), is pushing to build support for a bill he's sponsoring to federally legalize cannabis.

Dawson said she's been impressed by diversity efforts of Cann—which produces low-infused seltzers and is backed by investors like actress and Goop Founder Gwyneth Paltrow—and she intends to focus on furthering those objectives. The announcement of her involvement in the cannabis business was first reported by Bloomberg.

Booker is one of the three authors of the the Cannabis Administration and Opportun

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POLITICS

California Bill To Legalize Possession Of Psychedelics Clears Another Hurdle But Faces Key Challenge Next Week



Published 1 day ago on August 18, 2021

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



A Senate-passed bill to legalize possession of certain psychedelics in California cleared a procedural hurdle on Monday—but it faces another critical challenge in the Assembly next week that could decide its fate.

After passing the Senate earlier this year, the legislation from Sen. Scott Wiener (D) moved through two Assembly committees so far. It advanced through a second reading

on the chamber's floor on Monday and was re-referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

Next time, we'll see if the bill can move forward. Stay tuned for more updates.

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