

POLITICS

20-Year-Old Kansas Lawmaker Files Drug Decriminalization Bill




Published 8 months ago on February 12, 2021

By Kyle Jaeger 





A 20-year-old Kansas lawmaker introduced a bill on Tuesday to broadly decrim  possession in the state.



Rep. Aaron Coleman (D), who defeated a seven-term incumbent in a Democratic prin year, filed the legislation. He told Marijuana Moment in a phone interview on Wedne he was inspired by a [voter-approved initiative in Oregon](#) that ends the threat of jail ti simple drug possession.

“That’s what got me into this,” he said. “But, you know, I’ve always really believed th use is a mental health problem and not a criminal one. It needs to be treated like tha

Under his proposal, possession of controlled substances for personal use would be co a civil offense punishable by a \$100 fine.

For people caught in possession of drugs other than marijuana, prosecutors would al

The bill would also reduce penalties for manufacturing or distributing controlled substances by lowering the sentencing requirements for people convicted of such offenses. However, Coleman stressed that drug offenses beyond simple possession would still result in felony charges.

That's part of the messaging he intends to bring to the legislature as he attempts to persuade skeptical lawmakers about the need for reform.

"It's in no way legalizing manufacturing or distribution, they're still going to be classed as a felony," Coleman said. "What this is going to do is allow police to stop focusing on the street-level users and focus on the distributors and manufacturers of these drugs. This bill, if passed, is a gift to the police because it allows them to focus on the true criminals and not the end user."

This bill's [introduction](#) comes as Kansas lawmakers and the governor [step up their push to legalize medical cannabis](#) in the state. Gov. Laura Kelly (D) recently announced a plan to implement the policy change and [use marijuana tax revenue to fund Medicaid expansion](#).

Coleman said that there's a possibility that his decriminalization proposal could be included in the state's medical cannabis legislation. But whether it is included or not, marijuana reform itself has already proved to be a thorny issue in the state's Republican-controlled legislature, with [legalization bills stalled in committee](#) last session.

The Gen Z lawmaker said that another [bill](#) he filed, which would require lobbyists to wear body cameras while pushing their agendas—and make those videos public records—could help advance drug policy reform by bringing transparency to the players working to maintain their prohibitionist status quo.

"I think, absolutely, if we can get these body cameras, we'll get more people involved in the process. We're going to really highlight the corruption that's going on and probably get these people to self-regulate," he said.

In any case, when it comes to drug decriminalization, 2021 has already seen lawmakers

substance disorders.

A bill introduced last month by a New York senator would [decriminalize low-level po](#)
[of any controlled substance](#) and instead levy fines of \$50.

Activists across the country have also been pursuing a more targeted decriminalizati
to deprioritize enforcement of laws against psychedelics like psilocybin and ibogaine

A Republican lawmaker in Iowa introduced a bill on Tuesday to [remove psilocybin fr](#)
[of controlled substances](#).

In California, a lawmaker said late last year that he planned to file a bill that would
decriminalize psychedelics. And activists are hoping to see further legislation to bro
[remove criminal penalties for simple drug possession](#).

Legislators in [Connecticut](#), [Florida](#), [Hawaii](#), [Texas](#) and [Virginia](#) are also considering
psychedelics and drug policy reform bills for the 2021 session.

Marijuana Legalization Has Majority Support In North Carolina, Poll Finds

A majority of North Carolina adults support legalizing marijuana for adult use—and three in four say it should be legal for medical purposes—according to a new poll. The survey found that the percentage of respondents who favor recreational cannabis legalization increased by nine points, from 45 to 54 percent, since the firm last polled North ... 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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for the legal cannabis industry now, rather than standing by while states construct an ad l system of conflicting banking rules, will go a long way toward easing that transition.”

By Rodney E. Hood, National Credit Union Administration

The evolution of a legal marijuana industry over the last decade is among the most strikin social and cultural changes in recent memory. After decades of prohibition, today 36 state

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Congressman Says He'll Bring The Psychedelics Reform Movement To Capitol Hill 'This Year'



Published 19 hours ago on October 6, 2021

By **Kyle Jaeger** 



A congressman said on Wednesday that he intends to help bring the psychedelics re movement to Capitol Hill “this year.”

Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), a longstanding champion of marijuana reform in Congress, made the comments at a symposium on psychedelics policy that was hosted by Harvard Law School’s newly established research institute, the [Project on Psychedelics Law and Regulation \(POPLAR\)](#).

He touted moves by voters in his home state of Oregon to [legalize psilocybin for therapeutic use](#) and more broadly decriminalize possession of currently illicit drugs during last year’s

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Bipartisan Pennsylvania Lawmakers Team On Marijuana Legalization Bill As Push For Reform In The State Heats Up



Published 22 hours ago on October 6, 2021

By Kyle Jaeger 



Pennsylvania is becoming something of a hotbed for marijuana legalization legislation, with Democratic state lawmaker on Tuesday announcing his intent to file a reform bill that he's working on with a Republican senator who announced his support for the policy change a earlier.

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