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POLITICS

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



Published 2 days ago on October 6, 2021

By **Kyle Jaeger** 



A congressman said on Wednesday that he intends to help bring the psychedelics reform 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 School’s newly established research institute, the [Project on Psychedelics Law and Reform \(POPLAR\)](#).

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 election as examples of a growing movement that’s enacting reforms beyond just cannabis. Blumenauer said he plans to bring that reform push to Congress next.



Petrie-Flom Center  · Oct 6, 2021

@PetrieFlom

Replying to @PetrieFlom

"As we struggle to get through the COVID pandemic, we've got a mental health epidemic, where it's clear that our approaches have not been adequate," @repblumenauer says. #POPLAR





“I promise you I will do my part—not only assisting in the evolution of the Oregon [p] program, but I plan on bringing this movement to Capitol Hill this year in the same v developed the foundation for the support of our cannabis work,” he told attendees at psychedelics symposium. “I want to introduce the results of our work in Oregon and the country, and I would like your center to be able to help raise awareness on Capito this critical time in drug reform to help the federal government catch up to where the America is.”

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) was among the first lawmakers to raise the ps issue in Congress, twice filing an amendment to large-scale spending legislation that meant to promote research into substances like psilocybin and MDMA.

Both times, a significant number of Democrats joined Republicans in defeating the p though the margin slimmed in the last vote earlier this year compared to 2019.

“I think this is truly the opportunity of a lifetime,” Blumenauer said on Wednesday, “forward to working with you to make it a reality.”

He also said that there’s research into the therapeutic benefits of psilocybin that “go decades.” However, he stressed that “we need more and better research first and fore

“There are real life examples of people we know [who] have experienced [the benefits needs more scientific rigor,” he said. “Our advantage is that the American public is al the legislature and other policymakers. They are demonstrating their interest and th support” in reform.

“I think this is a major equity issue,” he said of ongoing criminalization. “One of the challenges we’ve had with our failed war on drugs—and its misapplication—is how it negatively impacted minorities and marginalized groups.”

“And I want to stress that I think it’s very important to respect traditional and sacred psychedelics by indigenous communities. Native Americans must not be an afterthought continued. “They have much to teach us, and we have much to respect in that tradition.”

The congressman didn’t offer specific details about what potential psychedelics-related legislation he plans to pursue in the coming months, but his remarks demonstrate how a localized movement has rapidly spread and reached the congressional level.

Denver became the first U.S. city to decriminalize psilocybin in 2019, and now sitting in the House of Congress are taking seriously psychedelics reform.

It’s not limited to Democrats like Blumenauer or Ocasio-Cortez, either.

Rep. Dan Crenshaw (R-TX) recently attempted to insert into defense spending legislation an amendment to require the Department of Defense to conduct a clinical trial into the therapeutic benefits of psychedelics for military members with chronic pain and PTSD. The amendment was blocked from receiving a floor vote by the House Rules Committee.

Crenshaw, a veteran himself, also recently moderated a conversation with a top psychedelics reform advocate. The congressman said that a veteran’s account of psychedelics therapy with MDMA “sounds amazing.”

Meanwhile, an official with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently said at a congressional hearing that the agency is “very closely” following research into the potential therapeutic benefits of psychedelics like MDMA for military veterans.

A House committee said in a report attached to spending legislation earlier this year that federal health agencies should pursue research into the therapeutic potential of psychedelics for military veterans suffering from a host of mental health conditions.

During joint hearings before House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees in March, veterans service organizations submitted written testimony backing a policy change to increase access to or increase research on medical cannabis, and one argued in favor of looser restrictions to enable veterans to utilize psychedelics in their mental health treatment.

A federal commission tasked with developing recommendations to improve mental health treatment for military veterans determined in a report early last year that Congress's executive branch should promote research into the therapeutic potential of marijuana psychedelics such as psilocybin mushrooms and MDMA.

The use of psychedelics among young adults is generally rising, a recent federal analysis found. And the head of the National Institute on Drug Abuse told Marijuana Moment believes the increased media attention to studies showing the medical value of such substances may be a contributing factor.

California Sen. Scott Wiener (D), who is sponsoring a bill to legalize possession of psychedelics, also spoke at Wednesday's Harvard event, as did advocates with the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies and Psychedelic Science Fund Collaborative.



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

Pennsylvania is becoming something of a hotbed for marijuana legalization legislation, with a Democratic state lawmaker on Tuesday announcing his intent to file a reform bill that he'll be working on with a Republican senator who announced his support for the policy change a day earlier. There are also two other Pennsylvania legalization proposals that ... Continue reading


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

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GOP Pennsylvania Lawmaker Files Psilocybin Research Bill For Veterans And First Responders



Published 2 hours ago on October 8, 2021

By **Kyle Jaeger** 



A coalition of Pennsylvania lawmakers introduced a bill this week that’s meant to promote research into the therapeutic potential of psilocybin mushrooms for mental health conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)—the latest example of how the psychedelic reform movement is gaining momentum.

Led by Rep. Tracy Pennycuick (R), the legislation, titled the Public Health Benefits of Psilocybin Act, would establish “a framework for research in this Commonwealth to discover

innovative methods to optimize the public health benefits of psilocybin.” It would prioritize studies that focus on veterans, retired first responders and their families.

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Former Attorney General Says U.S. Is ‘On Path’ To Federal Marijuana Decriminaliza



Published 18 hours ago on October 7, 2021

By **Kyle Jaeger** 



A former U.S. attorney general says that the country is “clearly on the path to decriminalizing marijuana” at the federal level as more states continue to advance reform.

Eric Holder, who served as the nation’s top law enforcement official under President Barack Obama, spoke on a drug policy panel hosted by Ohio State University’s Moritz College of Law on Thursday. He said he felt encouraged that the U.S. is trending toward more lenient laws on drugs that treat addiction as a public health matter, and he also argued that federal cannabis reform is increasingly inevitable.

The war on drugs has cost people their livelihood and taxpayer dollars, Holder said, and

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Third California City Moves To Decriminalize Psychedelics As Reform Movement Expands



Published 20 hours ago on October 7, 2021

By Kyle Jaeger [Twitter](#)



Another California city has effectively decriminalized a wide range of psychedelics, with the Arcata City Council unanimously approving the reform on Wednesday.

The 5-0 vote means that the possession, cultivation and distributions of entheogenic substances like psilocybin and ayahuasca will be among the city's lowest law enforcement priorities.

The [measure](#) further calls on the Humboldt County District Attorney “to consider the spirit and intent of this resolution when evaluating whether to prosecute persons involved in the use of Entheogenic Plants and Fungi.”

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