

POLITICS

Colorado Activists File Competing Psychedelics Legalization Ballot Initiative For 2022



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By Kyle Jaeger



About a week after Colorado activists filed revised versions of [2022 ballot initiatives to legalize psilocybin](#) and create “healing centers” in the state, a second campaign has submitted their own competing proposal to legalize psychedelics.



Activists with Decriminalize Nature Boulder County filed the new, one-page initiative on Friday. It would allow adults 21 and older to possess, cultivate, gift and deliver psilocybin, psilocyn, ibogaine, mescaline and DMT.

Further, the measure says that it would be lawful to conduct psychedelics services for guidance, therapy and harm reduction and spiritual purposes with or without accepting payment. It would not be legal to sell any of the psychedelics, however.

The campaign is being headed by activists Nicole Foerster and Melanie Rodgers, a proponent of Denver’s 2019 psilocybin decriminalization initiative who also petitioned for a successful Washington, D.C. decriminalization measure.

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existing laws around these controlled substances.”



Decriminalize Nature Boulder County
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press release explaining the Colorado Ballot Proposal filed by
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For Immediate Release:
Colorado Decriminalization Activists Submit Proposed Statewide Ballot Initiative to Decriminalize Entheogenic Plants and Fungi in 2022

On Friday January 28th, proponents Nicole Foerster and Melanie Rose Rodgers filed a [Colorado Ballot Proposal](#) that would revise the Colorado Controlled Substances Act to make the adult possession and use of schedule one entheogenic plants and fungi (not including psilocybin) no longer a violation of Colorado law. Nicole Foerster (director of decriminalization efforts in Boulder County and Colorado) and Melanie Rodgers (proponent of 101 - the 2019 ballot initiative that decriminalized psilocybin in Denver - and canvasser for Decriminalize Nature DC) along with a coalition of natural medicine activists drafted the proposed initiative to ensure the personal possession and use of these medicines would no longer be subject to criminal penalties especially given the increased corporate interest in commercializing these medicines in Colorado and across the nation. The proposed initiative would also decriminalize facilitation related to these medicines including supervision, guidance, therapeutic, harm reduction, spiritual, and supportive services as well as the possession of any associated paraphernalia.

The proposed initiative comes from a series of community wide discussions where participants voiced their desire that presently and historically occurring use of these healing entheogens be free from the risk of criminal penalty. The passing of a simple, straightforward, decriminalization initiative will open the door to increased opportunities for dialogue, research, and education efforts that will assist in informing future policy regarding these medicines. Foerster states, "Without decriminalization and the security it allows for affected communities to more effectively organize, regulatory models will make it difficult for the most disadvantaged groups of our population to continue to access the natural medicines they safely use to heal. To address this we are advocating for a simple change to existing laws around these controlled substances." The decriminalization of entheogenic plants and fungi will cost taxpayers nothing to implement. Data from cities across the nation that have passed similar policies, including Denver, consistently show the passing of decriminalization policy is associated with no risk to public health and safety. Decriminalization allows people to continue to safely access these medicines, as they have for centuries, without the risk of criminalization.

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The new [filing](#) is a sign of splintering between Colorado advocates who share the objective of ending psychedelics criminalization and ensuring access but who apparently disagree about the regulatory approach.

The separate, recently revised initiatives filed by the well-funded national New Approach PAC and supported by people like philanthropist David Bronner of the soap company Dr. Bronner’s is much more thorough and contains key differences from the simple adult-use legalization proposal that have now been introduced.

Under the revised measures, which are titled the Natural Medicine Health Act, there would be a two-tiered regulatory model, where only psilocybin would be legalized and regulated for therapeutic use until June 2026, after which point regulators could expand the policy change to include other psychedelics that are listed in the proposal like ibogaine, DMT and mescaline that’s not derived from peyote.

The decision to add additional psychedelics to the program would be made by the Department of Regulatory Agencies in consultation with a Natural Medicine Advisory Board that would be established. The board would be comprised of 15 members, including people who have experience with psychedelic medicine in a scientific and religious context.

There would be no possession limits for the entheogenic substances, unlike the initial measures that were filed by the campaign last month.

These latest filing comes more than two years after Denver became the first city in the U.S. [to decriminalize psilocybin mushrooms](#). Kevin Matthews, who served as campaign director of that local push, is now a chief petitioner for the wider ranging statewide ballot effort. Various activists involved in the 2019 campaign have [signaled interest in building upon the reform](#).

The initiatives must still be assigned an official ballot title and summary from the state before they’re approved to begin signature gathering. The broader measures are [scheduled](#) to receive a review and comment hearing on February 3, whereas the new initiative filed on Friday is set to be heard on February 11.

If approved by state officials, activists will need to collect 124,632 valid signatures from registered voters to achieve ballot access.

The Colorado ballot initiatives seek to accomplish something similar to what California activists are actively pursuing. California advocates are in the process of collecting signatures for a [ballot initiative to legalize psilocybin mushrooms](#) in the state.



with studying the “use of plant-based medicines to support mental health,” according to a [summary](#). The ballot campaign is not affiliated with that legislative effort.

“The policy review panel shall submit a report on its findings and policy recommendations to the House of Representatives Public and Behavioral Health and Human Services Committee and the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, or any successor committees; the governor; and the Department of Human Services,” it says.

Meanwhile, legislative efforts to enact psychedelics reform are also underway in other states across the country.

For example, a bill to decriminalize a wide array of psychedelics in Virginia was taken up by a House of Delegates panel on Monday, [only to be pushed off until 2023](#). A separate Senate proposal to decriminalize psilocybin alone was defeated in a key committee on Monday.

In Oregon, where voters approved a historic 2020 initiative to legalize therapeutic psilocybin program, as well as another to broadly decriminalize currently illicit drugs, lawmakers introduced a bill last week [meant to promote equity into the program](#).

Two Republican Oklahoma lawmakers recently filed bills meant to promote research into the therapeutic potential of psilocybin, and one of the measures would further [decriminalize low-level possession of the psychedelic](#).

A GOP Utah lawmaker also introduced a bill this month that would set up a task force to study and make recommendations [on the therapeutic potential of psychedelic drugs](#) and possible regulations for their lawful use.

In Kansas, A lawmaker also recently filed a bill to [legalize the low-level possession and cultivation](#) of psilocybin mushrooms.

A Republican Missouri lawmaker introduced a bill this month to give residents with serious illnesses legal [access to a range of psychedelic drugs](#) like psilocybin, ibogaine and LSD through an expanded version of the state’s existing right-to-try law.

California Sen. Scott Wiener (D) told Marijuana Moment in a recent interview that his bill to [legalize psychedelics possession](#) stands a 50/50 chance of reaching the governor’s desk this year. It already cleared the full Senate and two Assembly committees during the first half of the two-year session.

In Michigan, a pair of state senators introduced a bill in September to [legalize the possession, cultivation and delivery](#) of various plant- and fungi-derived psychedelics like psilocybin and mescaline.

Washington State lawmakers [also introduced legislation this month](#) that would legalize what the bill calls “supported psilocybin experiences” by adults 21 and older.

In Vermont, a broad coalition of lawmakers representing nearly a third of the House introduced a bill to [decriminalize drug possession](#).

New Hampshire lawmakers filed measures to [decriminalize psilocybin and all drugs](#).

Last year, the governor of Connecticut signed legislation that includes language requiring the state to [carry out a study into the therapeutic potential](#) of psilocybin mushrooms.

At the congressional level, bipartisan lawmakers sent a letter to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) this month, urging that the agency [allow terminally ill patients to use psilocybin](#) as an investigational treatment without the fear of federal prosecution.

Legalization And Banking In Meeting With Equity Advocates

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) held a meeting with a variety of marijuana reform and other advocacy groups last week to discuss social equity issues as he prepares to introduce a much-anticipated cannabis legalization bill this year. While activists involved in the Tuesday meeting told Marijuana Moment that Schumer again gave vague details about ... Continue reading

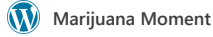


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MD & DE legal cannabis bills advance (Newsletter: February 21, 2022)



Maryland Lawmakers Vote To Put Marijuana Legalization Referendum On November Ballot



Differing Legal Marijuana Regulatory Models



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By Kyle Jaeger



The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) is renewing its push to promote federally funded research into marijuana as more states enact reform—specifically expressing interest in studies on differing cannabis regulatory models that are in place across the country.

In a notice of interest published on Friday, the agency outlined the types of study proposals it hopes to fund and gave instructions to researchers on how to apply. NIDA said the guidance is informed by recommendations from a [workgroup it set up to explore the issue in 2018](#).

The study solicitation is [nearly identical to one NIDA put out in 2019](#), but that earlier notice expired last month. Evidently the agency is committed to seeing these research objectives

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By Marijuana Moment





“Just putting this information together and putting it into the form that is useful is an extraordinarily large task.”

By Faith Miller, Colorado Newsline

Researchers have made “a great deal of progress” on reviewing available evidence of high-potency marijuana products’ health effects, the dean of the Colorado School of Public Health told state lawmakers Friday.

The scientific review is required under 2021 legislation, [House Bill 21-1317](#), that sought

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Police Keep Arresting People For Drugs Even As Incarceration Rates Drop, Pew Study Finds



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By Kyle Jaeger



Even as states have adopted less punitive drug policies—with an emphasis on treatment over incarceration—police have continued to arrest people for illegal substances at a steady rate, a new analysis from the Pew Charitable Trust found.

The report details several interesting trends in drug policy and enforcement that developed from 2009 to 2019. Researchers identified “divergent enforcement trends—high rates of arrest but substantially reduced incarceration—coupled with a lack of treatment options and high mortality rates among people with illicit drug dependence.”

There are a few data points that advocates are encouraged by: lower rates of incarceration.



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