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POLITICS

## Hawaii Senators Approve Psilocybin Task Force Bill In Committee, With Decriminalization Measures Still Pending





Published 4 days ago on February 15, 2022  
By Kyle Jaeger



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 Marijuana Moment on Friday

Maryland Lawmakers Vote To Put Marijuana Legalization Referendum On November Ballot: A floor vote on the House measures is expected next week, and a Senate committee will hear separate cannabis bills next month.

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A Hawaii Senate committee on Friday approved a bill to set up a state working group to study the therapeutic benefits of psilocybin mushrooms and develop a “long-term” plan to ensure that the psychedelic is accessible for medical use for adults 21 and older.



It’s one of several psilocybin measures—including one that’s broader in scope by decriminalizing the substance and requiring the establishment of therapeutic psilocybin treatment centers—that have been introduced and could be taken up in the legislature this session.

The Senate Health Committee unanimously passed the more modest proposal in a 5-0 vote, though one member formally noted his reservations. The panel also adopted an amendment that was recommended by the state Department of Health to protect department employees from facing ethics code violations if they participate in the proposed workgroup.

HTH-AEN, HTH DEFER, HTH, HTH DEFER Public Hearings 02-11-2022 1:00pm



The text of the [measure](#) says that “because the State has a shortage of mental health professionals, the State should actively consider novel, innovative, and safe solutions to treat its residents.” It then outlines the proposed composition of the workgroup and what it would be tasked with investigating.

Members would be required to study “the medicinal and therapeutic effects of psilocybin” and develop “a long-term strategic plan to ensure the availability of therapeutic psilocybin or psilocybin-based products that are safe, accessible, and affordable for adults twenty-one years of age or older.”

While the report as drafted would have required the workgroup to submit a report with its findings and recommendations within 20 days of the 2023 legislative session, the committee approved another change on Friday that pushed back the effective date of the bill to January 1, 2050.

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—  
This is a common legislative practice in the Hawaii legislature to leave open opportunities to further consider and revise a given bill as it moves through the process, which could include resolving differences legislation between chambers in conference.

The working group would also examine “federal, state, and local laws, regulations, administrative rules, and procedures regarding the therapeutic use of psilocybin,” scientific research into the psychedelic and “requirements, specifications, and guidelines for a medical professional to prescribe and provide psilocybin to patients in jurisdictions in which psilocybin is used to treat mental health conditions.”

Friday’s vote came two days after the committee met to discuss and take public comment on the measure, and a Department of Health representative cited its earlier [testimony](#) “expressing some concerns about emerging federal guidance [on psilocybin] and whether community discussions are premature.”



The official noted that the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has already “fast-tracked” research into the potential therapeutic use of the entheogenic substance. And he also conveyed concerns about the “scope of practice issues [prescribed in the bill], which are not in the wheelhouse” of the department.

In any case, the legislation cleared the Senate Health Committee and has also been referred to the Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee. The House companion [version](#) has yet to be scheduled for a hearing.

The full Senate did approve measures with similar language and directives last year, but they were in the form of non-binding resolutions.

What also remains to be seen is whether Hawaii lawmakers will have the appetite to advance a broader psilocybin bill that was filed for this session but has also yet to be scheduled for committee hearings.

The [measure](#), which is virtually identical to a [bill](#) that was carried over from the 2021 session, would remove psilocybin and psilocyn from the list of controlled substances and require the Department of Health to “establish designated treatment centers for the therapeutic administration of” the psychedelics. It would further create a review panel to study and submit reports on the impacts of the reform to the legislature.

The bill text is the same as the legislation that was carried over in 2021, except that the deadlines that the panel faced to submit their annual reports begins one year later in the new version.

Also last year, [the state legislature adopted a resolution](#) that asks the state to seek an exemption from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) stipulating that it is permitted to run its medical cannabis program without federal interference.

Hawaii is just one of numerous states where lawmakers are taking the lead on psychedelics reform this year.

For example, the Utah House of Representatives [overwhelmingly approved a bill last week](#) to create a task force to study and make recommendations on the therapeutic potential of psychedelic drugs and possible regulations for their lawful use.

A group of Maryland senators recently filed a bill that would [create a state fund that could be used to provide free access to psychedelics](#) like psilocybin, MDMA and ketamine for military veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), while also supporting research into their therapeutic potential.

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 Republican Missouri lawmaker introduced a bill last 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.

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

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.

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

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.

Similar legislation was [also enacted by the Texas legislature](#), requiring the state to study the medical risks and benefits of psilocybin, MDMA and ketamine for military veterans in partnership with Baylor College of Medicine and a military-focused medical center.

Activists in Colorado recently [filed revised versions of 2022 ballot initiatives](#) to similarly legalize psilocybin and establish "healing centers" in the state. A competing campaign [filed a different psychedelics legalization last month](#).

Michigan activists [filed a statewide ballot initiative](#) this month that would legalize possessing, cultivating and sharing psychedelics and set up a system for their therapeutic and spiritual use.

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

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

## New York Bill Would Give Temporary Marijuana Licenses To Hemp Growers To Prepare For Sales And Promote Equity

Key members of the New York Assembly and Senate recently filed bills that would provide provisional marijuana cultivator and processor licenses for existing hemp businesses that take certain steps to promote equity in the emerging industry. The bicameral legislation is being led by Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes (D) and Sen. Michelle Hinchey (D). Peoples-Stokes ... 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 Times, VICE and attn.

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*POLITICS*

# Maryland Lawmakers Vote To Put Marijuana Legalization Referendum On November Ballot



Published 1 day ago on February 18, 2022

By **Kyle Jaeger**



A key Maryland House committee on Friday approved a pair of bills to put a marijuana legalization referendum on the November ballot and begin setting up details for the program if voters approve.

Both measures are being sponsored by Del. Luke Clippinger (D), who chairs the House Judiciary Committee that approved the measures. Del. Robbyn Lewis (D) said that the proposals are expected to be taken up on the floor “next week.”

Del. Robbyn Lewis   
[@RobbynLewis46th](#)



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# New York Assembly Leader Launches PAC That Will Support Pro-Marijuana Reform Candidates



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By **Kyle Jaeger**



A top New York lawmaker is launching an equity-focused political action committee (PAC) that will place a strong focus on electing candidates that support marijuana reform.

Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes (D) announced the EquityPAC earlier this week. The committee is centered on three policy pillars: cannabis, education and the environment. The leader will be discussing the PAC's mission at an event in New York City on Saturday, alongside U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and two other members of the state Assembly.

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# Canadian Bill To Decriminalize Drugs Gains Momentum



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By **Marijuana Moment**



*“It’s time to truly end the failed war on drugs. This is a health issue and I’m calling upon all parliamentarians to do the right thing.”*

**By Doug Johnson, Filter**

Right now, cities and provinces around Canada are pursuing decriminalization in piecemeal fashion. Recently, [British Columbia](#) and its largest city [Vancouver](#) applied for a Health Canada Exemption allowing the jurisdictions to decriminalize the possession of drugs including cocaine, amphetamines and opioids. Late last year, the Toronto Board of Health also [voted in favor](#) of asking for the exemption.

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