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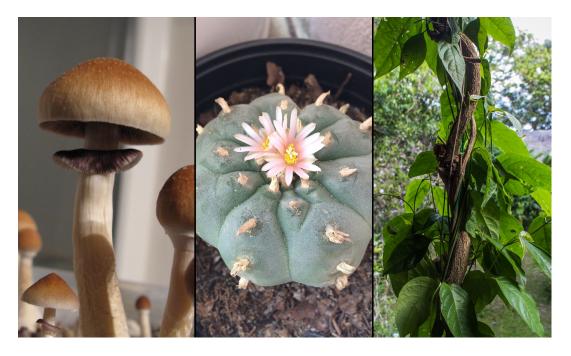
POLITICS

Maryland Senate Bill Would Provide 'Cost-Free Access' To Psychedelics For Military Veterans



Published 2 weeks ago on February 9, 2022

By Kyle Jaeger



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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.

The legislation, sponsored by Sen. Sarah Elfreth (D), would establish what's being called the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Alternative Therapies Fund. In addition to funding research into psychedelics through the state Department of Health, money would also be appropriated under the bill to provide "cost-free access to alternative therapies" for the target community.

Further, it says that regulators must periodically "consult with the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Johns Hopkins University, the University of Maryland, Sheppard Pratt, and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center" on the use of entheogenic substances for PTSD.

There are also reporting requirements that could set the stage for future legislation on providing regulated access to psychedelics for therapeutic use.

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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

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The Maryland Department of Health would need to first submit a report to the governor and legislation with "initial findings and recommendations" by December 1, 2022. Two years later, there would be another deadline for findings and recommendations that are based on studies that were specifically funded through the PTSD fund.

The report must include "any findings regarding the efficacy of alternative therapies as treatment for post–traumatic stress disorder," as well as "recommendations on budgetary, legislative, or regulatory changes to expand access to alternative therapies for veterans with post–traumatic stress disorder," the bill text says.

The bill already has nine senators as cosponsors, and it's scheduled to receive a hearing in the Budget and Taxation Committee on March 2.

The proposal is the latest example of how psychedelics reform is expanding into state legislatures following several successful local campaigns to decriminalize the plants and fungi.

Just last week, a <u>Utah House committee approved a bill</u> that would similarly create a task force to study and make recommendations on the therapeutic potential of psychedelic drugs and possible regulations for their lawful use.

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 last week 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.

Justice Department Evaluating 'Guardrails' For Safe Drug Consumption Sites As Court Deadline Approaches

The Justice Department may be open to authorizing harm reduction centers where people could use currently illicit drugs in a medically supervised environment and receive treatment resources, officials said in response to media questions. New York City launched the nation's first sanctioned supervised injection sites in November, and the city has touted the immediate benefits ... 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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Maryland Lawmakers Vote To Put Marijuana Legalization Referendum On November Ballot



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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. Robbvn Lewis 🕗



POLITICS

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



Published 2 days ago on February 18, 2022 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





"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, <u>British Columbia</u> and its largest city <u>Vancouver</u> 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 <u>voted in favor</u> of asking for the exemption.

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