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POLITICS

Oklahoma Lawmakers Approve Psilocybin **Decriminalization And Research Bill In Committee**



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By Kyle Jaeger



Oklahoma lawmakers on Wednesday approved a bill in committee to decriminalize low-level possession of psilocybin and promote research into the therapeutic potential of the psychedelic.

The measure from Rep. Daniel Pae (R) is one of two GOP-led psilocybin reform bills that were filed in the Oklahoma House last month. The other is less far-reaching in that it doesn't contain a decriminalization provision and is more targeted in its research guidelines.

The House Public Health Committee approved Pae's bill, HB 3414, in a 7-2 vote.

The 26-year-old lawmaker's proposal would make it so possession of up to one and a half ounces of psilocybin would be punishable by a \$400 fine.

To streamline studies into the substance, the measure would explicitly authorize research institutes to obtain psilocybin and use it for investigations into treatment efficacy for 10 different conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), severe depression and opioid use disorder.

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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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Rep. Logan Phillips (R), the sponsor of the separate psilocybin research bill but worked on the committee-approved measure alongside Pae, discussed and took questions about his colleague's legislation at Wednesday's hearing.

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"The number of veterans we've seen die every year, every day is astronomical. The goal of this is to see if it can be an alternative and an extra tool inside the toolbox for therapists, for mental health professionals, to treat those issues," Phillips said.

"Honestly, I served [in the military] for six years. Most of the people I served with killed themselves after they came back," he said. "This treatment could have helped my soldiers, my friends, my colleagues—so it's a passion to me to make sure that we get this to where we are moving the needle quickly to actually help these people."

Eligible research institutes would need to obtain a license for the state Department of Health "for the purposes of growing, studying, processing, and/or dispensing psilocybin containing fungi or other naturally occurring source organisms, or studying, extracting, synthesizing, and/or dispensing psilocybin or psilocin," according to the bill text.

People participating in psilocybin clinical trials would need to receive a written certification. Those conducting studies without a license, participating in a trial without a certification or otherwise acting out of compliance with the bill by possessing psilocybin outside of the confines of research would face a maximum \$400 fine without the threat of jail time.

Before approving the bill, the panel adopted a small amendment from the sponsor that concerns certification requirements for research institutions that move forward with human clinical trials into the therapeutic efficacy of the entheogen.

The other Oklahoma psychedelics research bill from Phillips has not yet received a committee hearing. While the lawmaker's measure is more dialed back compared to Pae's by excluding the decriminalization provision, Phillips told Marijuana Moment in an earlier interview that he does support the policy change.

He also said that he feels both measures "have an extremely good chance of being enacted" in the conservative legislature, noting that a bill passed in Texas last year that requires the state to carry out studies on psychedelics for veterans.

Under Phillips's proposal, universities and research institutes would be authorized through a statewide investigational new drug program to carry out studies into the therapeutic potential of psilocybin for veterans of the military and Oklahoma National Guard who suffer from "major depressive disorder, severe depression, or any other form of depression or anxiety that is not adequately treated by traditional medical therapies."

The studies would still need to be approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

If the studies that are facilitated through his or Pae's bill and show therapeutic value for psilocybin, Phillips said that he could "absolutely" see an opportunity to expand on the reform by establishing a medical program for the psychedelic in Oklahoma similar to what Oregon voters approved in 2020, which is actively being implemented.

This latest committee development in Oklahoma is just the latest example of state lawmakers following the tide of local decriminalization efforts that have played out across the country.

Just last week, a Hawaii Senate committee 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.

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.

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 <u>filed revised versions of 2022 ballot initiatives</u> to similarly legalize psilocybin and establish "healing centers" in the state. A competing campaign <u>filed a different psychedelics legalization last month</u>.

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.

Bill To Create State-Run Marijuana Shops In New Hampshire Approved By House

The New Hampshire House of Representatives on Wednesday approved a bill to legalize marijuana through a state-run model. But pro-legalization advocates are sounding the alarm about the specifics of the proposal. The legislation from Rep. Daryl Abbas (R) cleared the chamber in a 235-119 vote, despite facing resistance from people on both sides of the ... Continue reading



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Photo courtesy of Dick Culbert.

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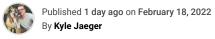


Kyle Jaeger is Marijuana Moment's Sacramento-based senior editor. His work has also appeared in High Times, VICE and attn.

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POLITICS

Maryland Lawmakers Vote To Put Marijuana Legalization Referendum On November Ballot





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."



POLITICS

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





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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POLITICS

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, 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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