



# MARIJUANA MOMENT

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POLITICS

## Oklahoma Republicans File Bills To Decriminalize Psilocybin And Encourage Research On Medical Benefits



Published 4 weeks ago on January 25, 2022  
By Kyle Jaeger



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.



Reps. Daniel Pae (R) and Logan Phillips (R) introduced the legislation last week. The proposals are designed to give the legislature different options with similar scientific study objectives, but a key difference is that Pae's would also decriminalize possession of up to one and a half ounces of psilocybin by making it punishable by a fine.

To streamline studies into the substance, the 26-year-old lawmaker's [proposal](#) 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.

Eligible 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.

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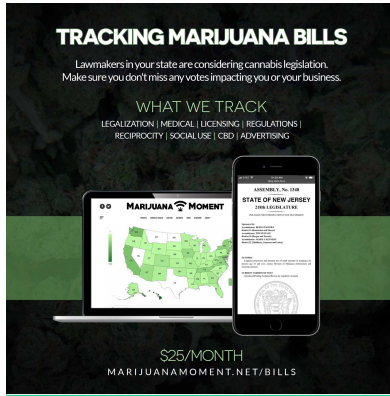
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People participating in psilocybin clinical trials would need to receive a written certification. Those conducting studies without a license, participating in a study without a certification or otherwise acting out of compliance with the bill would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

—

**Marijuana Moment is already [tracking more than 1,000 cannabis, psychedelics and drug policy bills](#) in state legislatures and Congress this year. [Patreon supporters](#) pledging at least \$25/month get access to our interactive maps, charts and hearing calendar so they don't miss any developments.**



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—

Phillips's separate [bill](#) is more prescriptive and doesn't contain decriminalization language, but he says he supports that policy change nonetheless.

"This is plant-based medicine. It grows everywhere," Phillips told Marijuana Moment in a phone interview on Friday. "We don't need to lock up people because they ate some mushrooms."

A military veteran himself who's worked with people with PTSD, Phillips said he's committed to exploring every option available to combat the mental health crisis. He said the research into psilocybin indicates that it's an "incredibly effective" therapeutic tool.

Asked about the prospects of passing the psychedelics reform legislation through the conservative state legislature, the lawmaker said that he feels "they actually have an extremely good chance of being enacted," noting that a bill passed in Texas last year that requires the state to [carry out studies on psychedelics for veterans](#).

"When you're looking at a specific populations of veterans, it's hard to say no to something that we know definitively helps them," he said. "If we can do that, I think you'll find that most conservatives, most Republican groups, especially here in the state of Oklahoma, we will bend over backwards to help communities suffering from mental illness. And anything that's military-involved is an easy selling point, especially when we know it works."

Under his 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).

Phillips said that he's heard from researchers who've said they feel reluctant to pursue federal registration to study the psychedelic without explicit protections build into Oklahoma law, and so this legislation is partially meant to give scientists that assurance.

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.

But he argued that his state has seen some "extremely negative consequences" from medical cannabis being legalized through a ballot initiative, and so "we don't want to get in a situation to where we have markets of potential negativity coming from" psilocybin. Advancing the reform through the legislature could help avoid those problems, he said.

"Even for Oklahoma—a place that people traditionally consider us extremely conservative Republican—we're not above helping," he said. "We want to see measures and methods, even for those non-traditional medicines, if it brings peace of mind, mental health to our communities, our citizens. We're going to be for that.

"It might be a tough fight, but we will work out the details," he said. "I think it's going to be good for Oklahoma."

The filing of the psychedelics bills in Oklahoma is just the latest example of state lawmakers following the tide of local decriminalization efforts that have played out across the country.

Last week, a Virginia Senate committee [discussed a bill to decriminalize psilocybin](#), with members on both sides of the aisle expressing general support for the concept.

A GOP Utah lawmaker also introduced a bill last week 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](#).

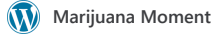
New Hampshire lawmakers filed measures to [decriminalize psilocybin and all drugs](#).

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.

## Colorado Meets Marijuana Industry Diversity Goal Ahead Of Schedule

Colorado officials announced on Monday that the state has achieved a “wildly important goal” of increasing diversity in the legal marijuana industry—but the data shows there’s still a way to go before cannabis business ownership is on par with the state’s population demographics. Nearly 17 percent of the state’s cannabis businesses are now minority-owned as ... 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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# Top Federal Drug Agency Funds Research On Differing Legal Marijuana Regulatory Models



Published 10 hours ago on February 21, 2022

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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## Colorado Lawmaker Presses For Marijuana Science Review To Look Fairly At Benefits As Well As Harms



Published 11 hours ago on February 21, 2022

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



Published 13 hours ago on February 21, 2022

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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