



POLITICS

Virginia Psilocybin Decriminalization Bill Defeated In Senate Committee After Top GOP Lawmaker Flips Support



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By Kyle Jaeger



In another setback from Virginia psychedelics activists, a key Senate committee on Monday defeated a bill that would have decriminalized psilocybin and psilocyn in the Commonwealth.

Advocates were hopeful that the measure would pass in the Senate Judiciary Committee, which [first held a hearing on the proposal earlier this month](#) where bipartisan lawmakers voiced support and the sponsor agreed to file an amendment that would put a focus on the therapeutic application of the psychedelic.

Sen. Ghazala Hashmi (D), did offer an amendment to her bill saying that psilocybin decriminalization would only apply to people who've consulted with a doctor, nurse, counselor or social worker—as opposed to broadly decriminalizing for people 21 and older as originally drafted. But that evidently did not earn enough support, and the members agree to pass it by indefinitely by a 8-6 vote, with one absence.

“Numerous studies have shown that psilocybin is an effective treatment for those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and addiction,” Hashmi told



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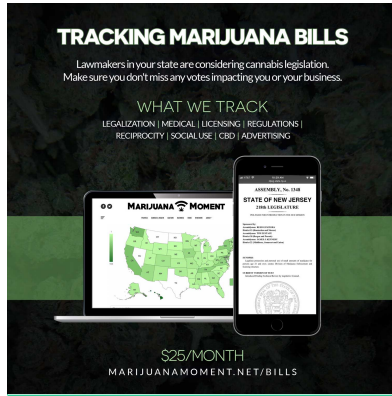
Senate Minority Leader Tommy Norment (R) had previously signaled support for the [bill](#), and so activists were somewhat taken aback when he voted against it at Monday's [hearing](#).

"Decriminalize Nature is disappointed in how this played out," Mark Miller, co-founder of Decriminalize Nature Virginia and a licensed professional counselor, told Marijuana Moment. "We represent veterans who are diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and to assist them in healing from the experiences that they had overseas or wherever."

"We owe it to our veterans and our first responders to support them any way we can, which includes medicines that have been found, beyond a shadow of a doubt, in research to be able to assist," he said.

Miller said that the organization will continue to work to educate legislators and advance local decriminalization measures across the state in the interim before the legislature acts.

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.



Learn more about our [marijuana bill tracker](#) and become a [supporter on Patreon](#) to get access.

There was a similar House bill from Del. Dawn Adams to decriminalize a wider array of psychedelics that was also amended to focus on the medical use of the substances, but members of [a subcommittee approved a motion to carry the measure over until 2023](#) to further tweak it and build support.

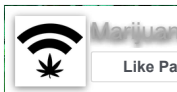
Given that the House is newly controlled by Republicans, that measure's prospects seemed somewhat slimmer than than more dialed-back Senate proposal.

Misinformation seemed to be a theme in both the House and Senate committees. Members raised concerns about whether the proposal would lead to magic mushrooms dispensaries or increased impaired driving, even though the bill would neither facilitate retail sales nor permit unlawful activity like driving under the influence.

Neither bill as drafted or amended would have legalized psychedelics for medical or recreational use; rather it would have made possession of the entheogens punishable by a \$100 fine, instead of a Class 5 felony as it's currently designated.

Any dollars collected from psychedelics possession violations would have gone to the state's Drug Offender Assessment and Treatment Fund, which supports substance misuse treatment programs and drug courts.

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of research indicating that psychedelics could be powerful tools to combat conditions like treatment-resistant depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Even if the legislature had approved either piece of legislation, it would likely have faced resistance from the state's new Republican governor, Glenn Youngkin, who has expressed concerns about [implementing a commercial marijuana market](#) in line with what the Democratic legislature and outgoing governor approved last year.

These psychedelics reform proposals are some of the latest to be introduced in state legislatures this session as the decriminalization movement spreads.

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.

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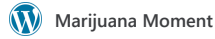


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Marijuana Employment Testing Under New Congressional Bill

A coalition of more than two dozen congressional Democrats have filed bill on promoting workplace investment to combat climate change, and they want to boost the workforce nationwide by protecting people in legal marijuana states from being penalized due to federal drug testing policies. The Climate Resilience Workforce Act, which is being led by Rep. ... 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



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By Kyle Jaeger

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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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“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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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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