

SLOG

NEWS • DRUGS • OLYMPIA

Washington Bill to Legalize Psilocybin Mushroom Treatment Centers Won't Pass

by [Rich Smith](#) • Feb 2, 2022 at 1:55 pm

Like 40

Share

Tweet 



Shroom bill's gonna die. MOHA EL-JAW / GETTY

A bill that would allow the Department of Health to regulate magic mushrooms and allow adults to use them in controlled settings will not pass this session, according to state Sen. Jesse Salomon (D-Shoreline), who sponsored the legislation.

SPONSORED



Help stop the spread of syphilis in our community.

Protect yourself by learning the symptoms, where to get tested and how to get cured at syphilisrising.com

The proposal, which was based on legislation Oregon adopted last year, would not decriminalize psychedelic mushrooms for personal use. It would, however, give the DOH 18 months to create a bunch of rules around the process of growing mushrooms and selling them to "service centers," where trained and licensed trip-sitters would gently guide people over the age of 21 along the paths of their healing journeys.

The bill also provided for an optional "integration session" with clinical psychologists or other professionals, who would meet with patients after the psychedelic effects of the plant wore off.

And, with equity in mind, the legislation established a two-year period wherein only Washington state residents could acquire a license to grow or sell shrooms, or operate a service center.

Over the phone, Sen. Salomon said members from both parties expressed interest in the bill, and that their concerns centered less on drug use stigma and more on "the mechanics." He mentioned possible issues with the DOH, which might struggle to stand up a new regulatory framework for mushrooms while it has its hands full with COVID. He also said

lawmakers wanted to "trouble-spot issues" around the potential for losing federal revenue for providing a safe place for people to use the medicine.

Salomon expressed disappointment in the outcome, but he said he was excited to push for a budget proviso that would "create a task force of stakeholders to look at [the bill] and issue-spot some implementation problems, such as the need to work with the Department of Justice to make sure they don't come down on us," and maybe handle some draft DOH rule-making prior to future passage.

The outcome will likely also disappoint the 300+ people who signed on in support of the bill during its hearing in the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee Wednesday morning. During the meeting, dozens of doctors, veterans, and researchers offered moving testimony about the **well-documented benefits** of using psychedelics to treat a bunch of intractable mental health issues, such as alcoholism and nicotine addiction, PTSD, and depression.

University of Washington clinical faculty Tony Rousmaniere attested to the strength of the **growing body of research** on psychedelic treatment and pointed to a **letter** supporting the legislation signed by 45 mental and behavioral health care professionals.

Marcus, Amber, and the Creation of VETS, Inc.

Matthew Griffin, who introduced himself as a West Point grad who did four tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, said the three months following his experience with psychedelic mushrooms trumped the 12 years of counseling he secured in the Veterans Affairs system. "I believe this is a shot that Washington should take," he said. Three other veterans told similar stories.

Dana Phillips said longterm depression that followed an abusive relationship "greatly affected" her current relationship and her parenting. Then one day her husband took her on a "trip of a lifetime." The next day she woke up feeling alive and happy for the first time.

In the face of overwhelmingly positive testimony, some senators on the committee expressed skepticism. Republican state Sen. Ann Rivers said she knew of people who "had a bad trip," and asked if passing the bill wasn't "putting the cart before the horse." Democratic State Sen. Karen Kaiser suggested putting some "guardrails" around the proposal by creating a smaller pilot program.

Law professor and medical doctor Mason Marks, who serves on the advisory board of Oregon's psilocybin mushroom regulatory system, said Washington would "definitely not" be putting the cart before the horse. He pointed again to science showing that the plants are "nontoxic" and "not addictive," and he reminded the committee that the Netherlands has been offering mushrooms over the counter for a while now and the sky hasn't fallen. He also mentioned a **report** from Denver showing that decriminalizing the plant led to "no significant impact on public safety."

SUPPORT THE STRANGER

More than ever, we depend on your support to help fund our coverage. Support local, independent media with a one-time or recurring contribution. Thank you!

CONTRIBUTE

Nathan Sackett, an assistant professor in addiction psychiatry at UW, sympathized with Rivers's concern, saying "the possibility of harm for some people when they do it in uncontrolled environments" certainly warranted caution, but he argued that possibility was "significantly reduced" in the regulated environment the bill described.

All those concerns aside, Sen. Salomon remains hopeful for pieces of the bill to get through the budgeting process.

In the meantime, the process to **decriminalize** shrooms in Seattle continues to limp along. Back in October, the city council unanimously passed a **resolution** to make psychedelic drugs the lowest priority for cops. The council wanted to hold off on doing anything more until the Legislature solidified its response to a Supreme Court decision that essentially decriminalized simple drug possession statewide, but lawmakers in Olympia gave themselves until the end of next year to figure that out, so it'll probably be a while.

Subscribe



SLOG PM: TRUMP LAUNCHES HIS LIL' APP, COLOMBIA DECRIMINALIZES ABORTION, AND IT'S ABOUT TO BE COOOOOOLD

The Stranger depends on your continuing support to provide articles like this one. In return, we pledge our ongoing commitment to truthful, progressive journalism and serving our community. So if you're able, please consider a small recurring contribution. Thank you—you are appreciated!

[CONTRIBUTE NOW](#)

[Share on Facebook](#)

[Share on Twitter](#)

[1](#)

Rich Smith

Rich Smith is *The Stranger's* associate editor. He writes about politics, books, and performance. You can read his poems at www.richsmithpoetry.com

[FOLLOW](#)

[EMAIL](#)

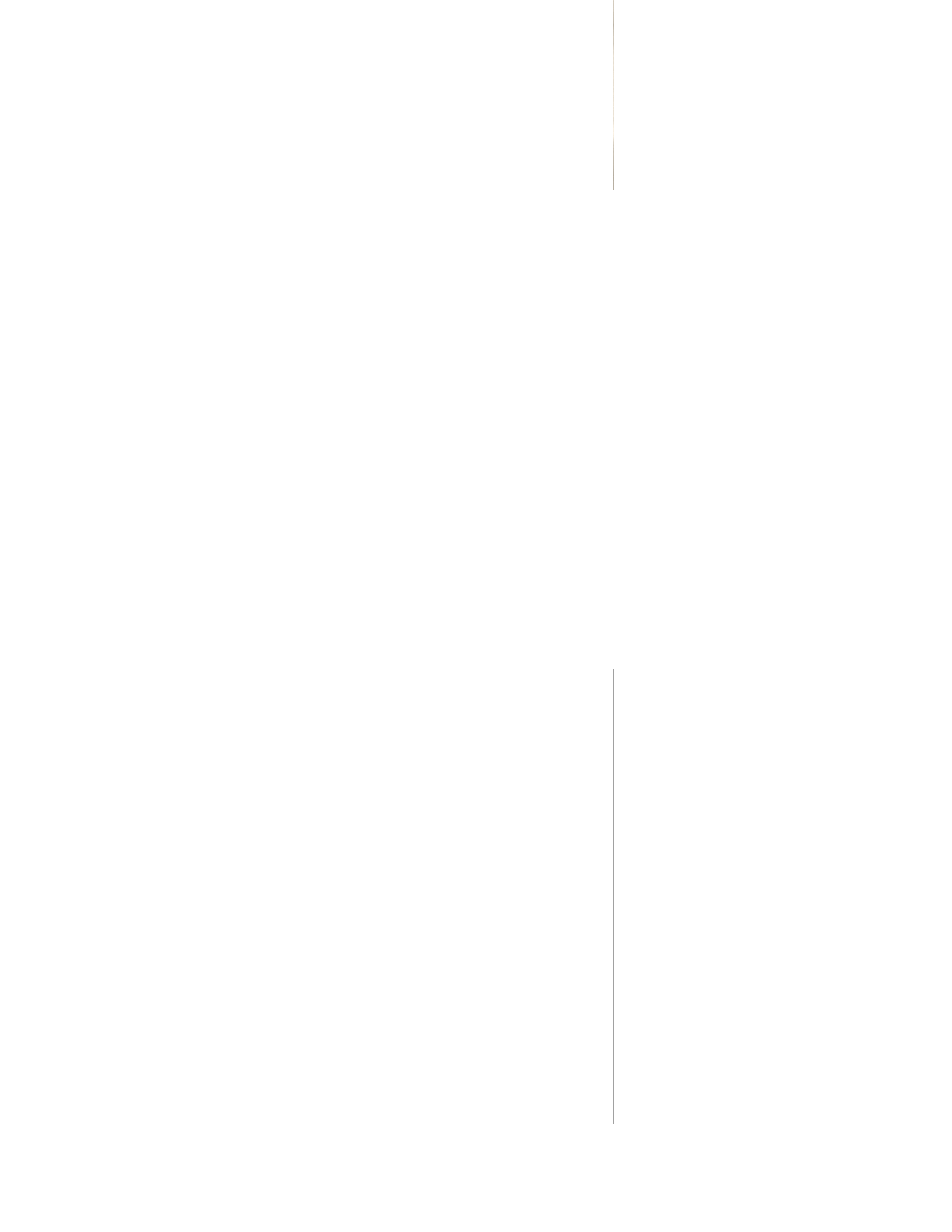
[MORE ARTICLES](#)

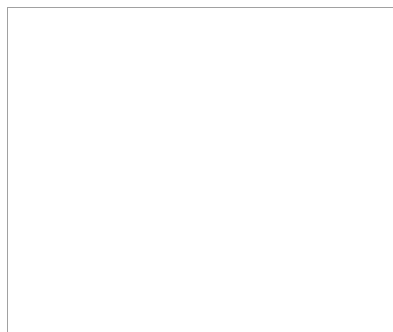
You might also be interested in these:

A Top Pick This Week: Watch *Eve's Bayou* on 35mm Film This Thursday
by [Charles Mudede](#)

Repealing the Capital Gains Tax Is a Long Shot
by [Bryan Kirschner](#)

One Dead, Five Injured from Shooting at Black Lives Matter March in Portland
by [Alex Zielinski](#)







theStranger

All contents © Index Newspapers LLC
800 Maynard Ave S, Suite 200, Seattle, WA 98134

[Contact](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Takedown Policy](#)