

POLITICS

Another Michigan City Approves Psychedelics Decriminalization As Activists Pursue Statewide Ballot Measure



Published 5 days ago on March 23, 2022

By Kyle Jaeger 



Yet another Michigan city has moved to decriminalize psychedelics like psilocybin and ibogaine as activists continue to pursue a broader statewide policy change to legalize the entheogenic substances through the ballot.

The sponsor of the newly enacted local measure gave compelling testimony ahead of Tuesday’s vote, noting that he’s personally used psilocybin to treat depression and anxiety.

The Hazel Park City Council unanimously approved the resolution, which was supported by Decriminalize Nature Hazel Park and sponsored by Councilmember Luke Londo.


With the body’s vote, Hazel Park becomes the third city in Michigan to enact the reform after [Ann Arbor](#) and [Detroit](#). The Grand Rapids City Council also approved a resolution last year [supporting the decriminalization of a wide range of psychedelics](#). However, the measure fell short of what activists had hoped, in that it doesn’t actually change any city enforcement practices and merely expresses support for future reforms.


In Hazel Park, Londo put the issue’s rapid development into context ahead of the vote on his resolution.



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...here we are, years later with entheogenic plants. While the substances may be different, the underlying conclusion is the same.”

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Luke Londo @llondo · Mar 22, 2022 

Tonight the @cityofhazelpark City Council adopted my resolution to decriminalize entheogenic plants 🌿, making us the 3rd city in Michigan to do so - and the 14th in the country. I'm grateful to Council for passing it unanimously, and to @DecrimNature Michigan for their advocacy.

Luke Londo
@llondo

Entheogenic plants are legitimate therapeutic and sacred substances that are proven to improve a person's well-being, help overcome addiction, and bring you closer to whatever it is you choose to worship.

We need to do more than destigmatize - we need to normalize entheogenics.

6:08 PM · Mar 22, 2022 from Hazel Park, MI 

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The Hazel Park resolution first discusses the therapeutic potential of psychedelics for conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, end-of-life anxiety and cluster headaches.

It concludes by saying that “the Mayor and City Council hereby declare that it shall be the policy of the City of Hazel Park that the investigation and arrest of persons for planting, cultivating, purchasing, transporting, distributing, engaging in practices with, or possessing Entheogenic Plants or plant compounds which are on the Federal Schedule 1 list shall be the lowest law enforcement priority.”

Watch the Hazel Park City Council discuss and vote on psychedelic decriminalization, around 35:20 into the video below:

The [measure](#) further states that “city funds or resources shall not be used in any investigation, detention, arrest, or prosecution arising out of alleged violations of state and federal law regarding the use of Entheogenic Plants.”

The resolution clarifies that it does not authorize commercial sales, consumption or possession in schools or by minors and driving while under the influence of substances like psilocybin, ayahuasca and ibogaine.

“As the resolution states, entheogenic plants improve mental health and wellbeing, and connect people with nature and whatever deity they worship,” Londo said. “This isn’t speculative. This is the truth, with a whole body of research to back it up.”

He also notably said that he personally has a “long history and body of experience with entheogenic plants” and has used psilocybin to treat depression and acute anxiety.

“I can tell you that there isn’t a single treatment that has done more for me than a well-timed consumption of psilocybin,” the councilmember said. “It allows me to check in with myself without the presence of anxiety or ego and take an honest accounting of my wellbeing. It also provides me with a clear path forward to make any necessary self improvements. It makes me a better son, friend, husband and legislator.”

After Ann Arbor decriminalized entheogenic plants and fungi, local lawmakers then declared September [Entheogenic Plants and Fungi Awareness Month](#).

The Washtenaw County prosecutor also announced that his office will not be pursuing charges [over possessing entheogenic plants and fungi](#), “regardless of the amount at issue.”

Under the Hazel Park resolution, it says that the mayor and Council are calling upon the Oakland County Prosecuting Attorney to do the same.



All of this comes as activists with Decriminalize Nature Michigan seek to place an initiative on the statewide November ballot to [legalize possessing, cultivating and sharing psychedelics](#) and set up a system for their therapeutic and spiritual use.

The Michigan Board of State Canvassers on Wednesday approved a slightly revised [version](#) of the initiative's text that fixes drafting errors in the initial petition.

The national psychedelics advocacy group Decriminalize Nature, its Michigan chapter and the youth-led organization Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP) are partnering on the effort.

The Michigan ballot measure would legalize a range of entheogenic substances for adults 18 and older. Laws currently prohibiting psilocybin, psilocyn, ibogaine, mescaline, peyote and DMT would be affected by the policy change.

There's also a sales component, with the measure authorizing entities "designated by a hospital or psychiatric hospital" that has received a "certificate of need" from the state Department of Health and Human Services to cultivate and sell the psychedelics to people whose doctors have issued a written recommendation for it.

Beside legalizing psychedelics, the measure proposes to amend state drug statutes, significantly reducing criminal penalties for possessing any other controlled substances classified under Schedule I or Schedule II of state law.

Also last year, Michigan senators filed a bill to similarly [legalize the possession, cultivation and delivery of an array of plant- and fungus-derived psychedelics](#) like psilocybin and mescaline.

Outside of Michigan, psychedelics reform is being pursued in state legislature and at the ballot in states across the country.

For example, the governor of Utah on Tuesday signed a bill 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 Connecticut legislative committee approved a bill last week that would set the state up to provide certain patients with [access to psychedelic-assisted treatment](#) with substances like MDMA and psilocybin. Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont (D) signed a separate bill last year that includes language requiring the state to [carry out a study into the therapeutic potential](#) of psilocybin mushrooms. A [workgroup](#) has since been meeting to investigate the issue.

A Maryland House of Delegates committee held a hearing last week on a bill to create a state fund that [could be used to provide access to psychedelics](#) like psilocybin, MDMA and ketamine for military veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The Washington State legislature recently sent a budget bill to the governor's desk that includes a proposal to [direct \\$200,000 in funding to support a new workgroup](#) to study the possibility of legalizing psilocybin services in the state, including the idea of using current marijuana regulatory systems to track psychedelic mushrooms.

This month, the Hawaii Senate 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.

Also this month, the Oklahoma House of Representatives passed a bill to [decriminalize low-level possession of psilocybin](#) and promote research into the therapeutic potential of the psychedelic.

A bipartisan coalition of Georgia lawmakers recently filed a resolution that [calls for the formation of a House study committee](#) to investigate the therapeutic potential of psychedelics like psilocybin and make recommendations for reforms.

Rhode Island lawmakers introduced [a pair of drug decriminalization bills this month](#)—including one focused on psilocybin and buprenorphine that would authorize doctors to prescribe the psychedelic mushroom.

An Oregon Senate committee also recently advanced a bill to ensure that equity is [built into the state's historic therapeutic psilocybin program](#) that's actively being implemented following voter approval in 2020.

A bill to decriminalize a wide array of psychedelics in Virginia was taken up by a House of Delegates panel in January, [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 in January](#) that would legalize what the bill calls “supported psilocybin experiences” by adults 21 and older.

Meanwhile, a Pennsylvania bill meant to promote research into the therapeutic potential of psilocybin mushrooms for certain mental health conditions may be in jeopardy, with the sponsor saying that the chair of a key House committee is [expressing reservations even after the legislation](#) was amended in an effort to build support.

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

Legislation was [also enacted by the Texas legislature](#) last year 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.



In a setback for the movement, California activists on Wednesday announced that they have come up short on collecting enough signatures to [qualify a measure to legalize psilocybin mushrooms](#) for the state’s November ballot, though they aren’t giving up on a future election cycle bid.

Colorado activists, meanwhile, recently selected one of the four psychedelics reform ballot initiatives that they drafted and filed for the November ballot, choosing to [proceed with a measure to legalize psilocybin](#), create licensed “healing centers” where people can use the psychedelic for therapeutic purposes and provide a pathway for record sealing for prior convictions. A competing campaign [filed a different psychedelics legalization last month](#).

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.

Image courtesy of [Kristie Gianopoulos](#).



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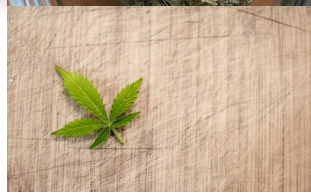
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POLITICS

Maryland Senators Discuss Putting Marijuana Legalization On Ballot, Delaying Regulations Until Next Year, In Committee



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By Kyle Jaeger



Maryland senators on Monday signaled that they may follow the House's lead by putting the issue of marijuana legalization on the state's November ballot and delay creating comprehensive regulations for the market until next year after voters make their decision.

Monday's hearing before the Senate Finance Committee was a whirlwind. There were three marijuana reform bills on the [agenda](#): two from Del. Luke Clippinger (D) [that already passed the House](#) and another from Sen. Brian Feldman (D).

But rather than tackle each proposal one-by-one, members discussed possible revisions to the Senate bill to more closely align it with one of Clippinger's bills on setting preliminary rules if

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Michigan Activists Begin Signature Gathering For Psychedelics Legalization Ballot Initiative Following State Certification



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By Kyle Jaeger



Michigan activists have launched a mass signature drive to place a measure on this November's statewide ballot to legalize possessing, cultivating and sharing psychedelics while setting up a system for their therapeutic and spiritual use.

The state Board of State Canvassers certified the latest version of initiative last week. Activists with Decriminalize Nature Michigan said in a press release on Monday that they've already gotten to work, with leaders of the campaign putting their signatures on the first batch of petitions.

Decriminalize Nature, its Michigan chapter and the youth-led organization Students for

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Most New York Voters Oppose Prioritizing Marijuana Licenses For People With Previous Convictions, Poll Finds



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By Kyle Jaeger



Most New Yorkers voters are against allowing people with prior marijuana convictions to get a head start in launching adult-use retail stores in the state, a new poll found just days after [regulators approved a proposal to do just that](#).

The survey from Siena College shows that only 33 percent of New Yorkers favor “ensuring that many of the first licenses for marijuana retail stores go to those previously convicted of marijuana-related crimes or their family members,” compared to 54 percent who are opposed and 13 percent who said they aren’t sure.

It’s an interesting data point, as there’s generally widespread consensus among legalization



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