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Oklahoma Senators Approve Psilocybin **Research Bill But Delete Decriminalization Provision Passed By House**



Published 3 days ago on April 11, 2022

By Kyle Jaeger 🔰



An Oklahoma Senate committee on Monday unanimously approved a House-passed bill to allow for the cultivation and administration of psilocybin by eligible institutions for research purposes—but the version that senators advanced omits a broader decriminalization provision that had previously been included.



The Senate Health and Human Services Committee advanced the amended legislation from Rep. Daniel Pae (R) in a 9-0 vote. The bill is a committee substitute of an earlier version that originally contained a provision to decriminalize psilocybin for unauthorized use by making it punishable by a fine without the threat of jail time.

That more closely aligns the bill, which passed the House last month, with a similarly dialedback measure from Rep. Logan Phillips (R) that was also filed in January

"This bill came over [from] the House—it had some decriminalization elements in there," Sen. Lonnie Paxton (R) said on Monday, adding that lawmakers had "worked a lot with it, trying to make sure that we clean it up."

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"That no longer exists," he said, referring to the decriminalization portion. "This is just for a university study."

Pae's measure as amended by the panel would explicitly authorize research institutes to obtain psilocybin and use the psychedelic for investigations into its treatment efficacy for ten different conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), severe depression and opioid use disorder.

Eligible institutions would need to register with both the state Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry "for the purposes of growing, studying, processing or dispensing psilocybin-containing fungi or other naturally occurring source organisms, or studying, extracting, synthesizing or dispensing psilocybin or psilocin," according to the bill text.

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People interested in participating in psilocybin clinical trials would need to receive a written certification from a physician that contains personal information as well as the quantity and form of the psychedelic to be administered.

Previously, the legislation included a provision that said 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 be subject to a maximum \$400 fine without the threat of jail time. But that language was removed in the committee substitute.

Because psilocybin is a Schedule I drug under federal statute, researchers would still need to be registered with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to study such substances.

Unlike Phillips's separate psilocybin research bill, this one does not specify which populations would be eligible to participate in, or be the focus of, the research initiatives. Phillips's legislation would authorize universities and research organizations to look into the therapeutic potential of the psychedelic for veterans of the military and Oklahoma National Guard specifically.

Phillips previously 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 <u>carry out studies on psychedelics for veterans</u>.

Oklahoma is one of numerous states where lawmakers are pursuing psychedelics reform this session.

For example, Maryland lawmakers sent a bill to the governor on Friday that would create a state fund to provide "cost-free" access to psychedelics like psilocybin, MDMA and ketamine for military veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury.

A Colorado House committee approved a bill last week aligning state statute to legalize MDMA prescriptions if and when the federal government ultimately permits such use. However, the House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services Committee also rejected separate legislation to create a psychedelics review panel to study substances like psilocybin and DMT and issue recommendations on possible policy changes.

Also this month, Georgia lawmakers advanced a bipartisan 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.

The governor of Utah last month 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 Missouri House committee also held a hearing last month on a GOP-led bill to legalize a wide range of psychedelics for therapeutic use at designated care facilities while further decriminalizing low-level possession in general.

A Connecticut legislative committee approved a bill last month 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.

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.

Last 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.

Rhode Island lawmakers introduced a pair of drug decriminalization bills last 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.

At the congressional level, bipartisan lawmakers sent a letter to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in January, urging that the agency allow terminally ill patients to use psilocybin as an investigational treatment without the fear of federal prosecution.

Back in Oklahoma, the Supreme Court recently rejected a lawsuit challenging a marijuana legalization initiative that activists are pursuing for the November ballot.

Now that the ruling has been issued, it will be a matter of weeks before the secretary of state's office is expected to set a date for activists to begin signature gathering. They will be pursuing the original, broader initiative and withdrawing the separate back-up version.

Maryland Bill To Fund Psychedelics Research And Access For Veterans Goes To Governor's Desk



Maryland lawmakers sent a bill to the governor on Friday that would create a state fund to provide "cost-free" access to psychedelics like psilocybin, MDMA and ketamine for military veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury. The bill from Sen. Sarah Elfreth (D) unanimously passed the Senate (46-

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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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