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LD 1914

Testimony in Support of LD 1914 - Rev. Peter Phippen - Georgetown, ME 04548

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on this issue given the importance of it to me and especially those who needlessly suffer from any number of mental and spiritual conditions, when help is available and constitutes the issue at hand. As the late legend John Lennon once sang, 'there are no problems, only solutions'. I see solutions to more pressing problems at the level of mind and Spirit than physical or structural. I feel our problems chiefly stem from collective feelings of disconnection - to our own inner selves, to one another and our natural surroundings that support life as we know it on this planet. Or conversely, we may be so connected with ideologies, political agendas and strong or extreme religious views that we aren't aware or don't even care that these 'identities' serve only to further divide and disconnect the people. These symptoms of disconnection may be felt by many people today, mostly remaining unrecognized for what the feelings may really mean. These disconnections from Self account for the epidemic of teen and young adult suicides, drug-overdose deaths including alcohol, fentanyl, heroin and other hard drugs- also called deaths of despair. These symptoms also can account for the seemingly endless and devastating increase in mass murders by fear-filled, hyper-violent lone gunman using weapons of war across this country and elsewhere. The 'disconnection effect' described here can certainly account for many of the ills we witness in the world.

I believe we can find a better way together. One that will benefit from the aid of ancient sacred wisdom and medicines - to help reconnect us to ourselves and by extension to one another. One of the major qualities of fungi in nature are their mycelial networks which connect entire tracts of forests which promote information and nutritional exchange, as well as establish the quality of the natural integrity of ecosystems they foster and maintain. The mycelial networks, the one-cell thick threads, that literally contain thousands of miles of an electrically and nutritionally active life-web, serve to carry and support entire ecosystems. The connecting quality of the Fungi Kingdom of Life is an extraordinary discovery in the last century by science, but one that has been understood by our Indigenous Ancestors for millennia. This connecting quality of medicinal fungi is being revealed in much of the ongoing research into psilocybin mushrooms' ability to reconnect people to themselves who may be suffering. Conditions such as treatment resistant depression, PTSD, chronic fear of impending death, addiction and many other psychological conditions including the treatment of Alzheimer's Disease and dementia are being investigated and positive results are being realized. We are reconnecting again with ourselves, our Souls and each other. With this reconnection, we can then 'see' how to move forward with a mindful, connected way, together. Inspiring new and various research categories, approaches and methods of psychedelic research includes other ancient and modern medicines. This to me is very exciting and gives me hope for our collective survival as a species on this planet. Johns Hopkins University has lead the field for many years in their psilocybin research such as:

Psilocybin can occasion mystical-type experiences having substantial and sustained personal meaning and spiritual significance written by R.R. Griffiths et al. Published July 2006 in Psychopharmacology (Times cited: 1,596)

"A groundbreaking double-blind study sought to evaluate the acute and longer-term psychological effects of psilocybin, a compound found in psychedelic mushrooms, compared to a control substance. The study aimed to fill the knowledge gap surrounding psilocybin's effects, which has been used for centuries in religious contexts. The results of the study demonstrated that psilocybin induced a variety of acute perceptual changes, subjective experiences, and fluctuating moods, including anxiety. Notably, it also increased measures of mystical experience. Two months after the sessions, volunteers reported that their psilocybin experiences held significant personal and spiritual meaning, which translated to sustained positive changes in attitudes and behavior, corroborated by community observer ratings. The research

concluded that when given under supportive conditions, psilocybin can trigger experiences akin to spontaneously occurring mystical experiences, opening doors for rigorous scientific investigations into their causes and consequences.

Psilocybin produces substantial and sustained decreases in depression and anxiety in patients with life-threatening cancer: A randomized double-blind trial written by R. R. Griffiths et al. Published November 2016 in Journal of Psychopharmacology (Times cited: 1,433)

The study aimed to assess the efficacy of psilocybin in reducing anxiety, depression, and improving the quality of life for patients with life-threatening cancer diagnoses. A two-session, double-blind, cross-over design was employed, in which participants received either a low or high dose of psilocybin in the first session and the alternative dose in the second session. The sessions were conducted in a supportive, living-room-like environment, and the psilocybin doses were administered in identical opaque capsules. Participants were encouraged to lie down and focus on their inner experiences throughout the sessions.

The results demonstrated that a single high dose of psilocybin, administered under supportive conditions, led to significant and enduring decreases in depression and anxiety, along with increased quality of life and reduced death anxiety, which explains why it's one of the most cited psychedelic research papers out there. These effects persisted for at least six months, with an overall clinical response rate of 78% for depression and 83% for anxiety. The study also found that mystical-type experiences during the sessions played a mediating role in the positive therapeutic outcome.

The news feed on Google has, on a daily basis, news items on the field of research into medicinal mushrooms, or laws being enacted to move forward in our understanding of these fantastic fungi. I highly recommend the internationally acclaimed film 'Fantastic Fungi' by Louie Schwartzberg, with eminent mycologist Paul Stamets. It is truly eye-opening. We are shown a whole Kingdom of life, Fungi, that are truly the founders and farmers of terrestrial nature, allowing the other Kingdoms of Life, Flora and Fauna to thrive. Stamets has written many books on the benefits of fungi, is a pioneer, entrepreneur and has even been given a title by NASA - AstroMycologist - to promote the understanding of mushrooms in space. The wonders of the world of fungi are just being discovered and many more are to come.

Please educate yourselves and your colleagues on this emerging field of research and all of the promising benefits medicinal mushrooms may be offering to humankind. At this juncture, we need as much help as we can get, and my hope is, we can expand our awareness with the help of medicinal mushrooms and other psychedelics to tackle the many issues facing us now and in the future.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this very timely bill - Senator Bailey's LD1914 legislation: An Act to Enact the Maine Psilocybin Health Access Act