



TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL KEBEDE, ESQ.
LD 1034 – Ought to Pass

**An Act to Decriminalize Personal Possession of
Therapeutic Amounts of Psilocybin for Adults**

Joint Standing Committee on
Criminal Justice and Public Safety

March 31, 2025

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Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, greetings. My name is Michael Kebede, and I am a policy director for the American Civil Liberties Union of Maine, a statewide organization committed to advancing and preserving civil liberties guaranteed by the Maine and U.S. Constitutions. On behalf of our members, I urge you to support LD 1034.

One of the many detrimental consequences of the War on Drugs has been government interference with the exploration of alternative drug therapies that could help people with many debilitating conditions like depression, anxiety, and substance use disorder. If enacted, this bill would decriminalize possession of one ounce or less of psilocybin for people aged 21 or older.

In a state that saw over 500 drug overdoses last year,¹ psilocybin therapy is particularly promising. Veteran psilocybin researcher William A. Richards, currently a researcher at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, writes that “[t]here is an abundance of published studies that strongly suggest that the use of psychedelic substances may be of significant value in the treatment of numerous mental health conditions.”² Research has shown psilocybin to be extremely promising to treat opioid use disorder, alcoholism, and other substance use disorders.³ Indeed, dozens of Mainers are currently using psilocybin “to treat depression, chronic pain, spasticity

¹ Overview: Composite total of fatal and nonfatal overdoses, Maine Drug Data Hub, U. Maine, Jan 2025, *available at* <https://mainedrugdata.org/january-2025-monthly-overdose-report/> (“Table 1: Composite reported overdose totals, all drugs, January 2024–January 2025”)

² William A. Richards, *Sacred Knowledge: Psychedelics and Religious Experiences*, p. 139 (Columbia University Press: New York 2015) (from chapter titled “Psychedelic Frontiers in Medicine”).

³ Albert Garcia-Romeu, Alan K. Davis et al, *Persisting Reductions in Cannabis, Opioid, and Stimulant Misuse After Naturalistic Psychedelic Use: An Online Survey*, *Front. Psychiatry* (Jan. 22, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2019.00955>, *available at* <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsy.2019.00955/full>.



and other neurologic conditions” and doing so, according to one physician, “with remarkable results.”⁴ Decriminalizing behavior that a growing community of physicians recommend will help Maine overcome its overdose and mental health crises and conserve the resources it might spend on drug enforcement.

We urge you to vote *ought to pass*.

⁴ Testimony of Dr. Dustin Sulak in favor of LD 1914, An Act to Enact the Maine Psilocybin Health Access Act, 131st Legislature, May 14, 2023, *available at* mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getTestimonyDoc.asp?id=10023739.