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LD 1582

I'm Gregory Ferenstein, owner of Frederick Research, a mental health and public affairs consulting firm. I'm here to testify on behalf of LD1582, An Act to Enact the Maine Psilocybin Services Act. After reviewing the details of the bill, I believe it will have a few implications for public health.

First, The bill does a reasonable job of institutionalizing best practices that allow Psilocybin to be safely and effectively used for both medical and non-medical purposes. Over the last couple years, many major hospitals, such as NYU Langone Health and John Hopkins have created major psychedelic research centers, with common practices and standards. Extensive clinical trials show that when these practices are in place, there are very few reported short or long-term harms to patients. A facilitated Psilocybin experience is a relatively conservative and evidenced-based approach to psychedelics

Second, there may be some concerns that this kind of legislation could lead to abuse, be a gateway to other drugs, or encourage substance abuse. As I've outlined in a report I wrote for the Brookings Institute, these implications are not in the experiences of areas that have already legalized or decriminalized psychedelics. Prohibition of psychedelic substances isn't really a barrier, as many—if not the vast majority of—users have easy access to illicit drugs. Prohibition simply makes it more difficult for medical professionals, law enforcement, and researchers to regulate psychedelic experiences and ensure that they will be used safely with best practices.

Finally, I recommend that the state enact practices to collect data on both the innovative and harmful experiences of users to inform public health researchers so that regulation can keep current with this important trend in mental healthcare.

Thank you