

CORRECTED

York, ME 03909

Committee on Health and Human Services  
Maine Senate, Maine State Legislature  
3 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

January 31, 2022

Dear committee members,

We as a US/North American culture have known since the 1950's that psychedelic experiences, chaotic though they appear, are in fact potentially healing events of great power. Psychiatrists in Canada had tremendous success helping alcoholics with LSD assisted therapy until that substance was rescheduled and prohibited. In the culture wars of the 1960's, this nation lost its way on this issue and doomed generations of people to lives of pain and despair for lack of adequate psychiatric treatment.

LSD, MDMA, DMT, ibogaine and psilocybin mushrooms have all by now been proven to possess therapeutic value in the treatment of one or more disorders of the mind. The question which I would hope a committee such as this one is focused on at this time is: how do we as a community wishing to care better for our neighbors safely and fairly unwind the system of prohibition currently in place? How do we responsibly bring these therapies to those who need them most? Remembering always that many of those desperately in need are the men and women returning from foreign wars.

Of all the substances being explored today for these new modes of psychiatric treatment, the psilocybin mushroom is the most likely candidate for initial legalization for a variety of reasons. It should strike any American

as concerning that a naturally occurring fungus of North America, readily foraged on both coasts and places in-between, could result in a person being charged with crimes simply for the gathering and consuming. From a more therapeutic standpoint, psilocybin is both highly effective at generating the heightened psychedelic states required for breakthrough healing and moderate in duration making for very manageable sessions. Research performed at Johns Hopkins Center for Psychedelic & Consciousness Research has proven repeatedly that psilocybin assisted therapy achieves incredibly high rates of success in treating conditions of the human mind, particularly treatment resistant disorders. End-of-life anxiety to substance abuse disorder to eating disorders, not to mention intractable depression and generalized anxiety, have all been treated with unusual success.

Some may worry that we don't have sufficient science yet to guarantee the safety of this approach to therapy and healing the human mind. Folk wisdom has certainly been devalued in this technological era and that is a shame. Since the middle 20th century, countless American citizens have risked penalty under law to access the medicine they needed to live a better life. Countless, but not voice-less. Surveys completed by prominent institutions both European and American have thoroughly documented the extensive underground use of psilocybin and other substances for healing purposes. There is no similarly documented crisis in public health resulting from this activity. Further, the pharmaceutical substances typically prescribed are inferior in terms of outcomes, harmful in terms of side-effects, and the mechanisms are just as poorly understood. The risks of allowing psychedelic assisted therapy using psilocybin are greatly outweighed by the well documented benefits.

The State of Maine has done an admirable job in how we've handled the legalization of medical and recreational cannabis. Bumps in the road cannot deny the overall success of both programs in permitting safe, adult use while minimizing negative social impacts. Surely we are up to the challenge again. National Institute on Drug Abuse Director Nora Volkow

has herself stated, “the train has left the station” on psychedelics. The DEA is increasing supply of schedule 1 substances to facilitate increased research. Massachusetts General Hospital is investigating the possibility that psilocybin can stimulate neuroplasticity or even neurogenesis. In the meantime, by legalizing psychedelic therapy using psilocybin, the State of Maine would once again be at the forefront of empowering its citizens to heal themselves in a natural way already accessed by many, but needed by so many more. Advance *LD 1582 - An Act To Enact the Maine Psilocybin Services Act* so that the great State of Maine can take the next step in once again leading our nation in compassionate care for those most in need.

Sincerely,

Richard P. Noonan  
York