

I am writing in support of LD 1582- An Act to Enact the Maine Psilocybin Services Act. As a Clinical Social Worker who has for 28 years cared about and cared for people living with mental illness, I am asking you to take seriously Senator Bailey's proposed bill to make legal psilocybin assisted psychotherapy. Just to name a few recent studies demonstrating the efficacy of psilocybin assisted therapy in treating Depression, research at Johns Hopkins University and New York University in 2016 and in 2020 at Johns Hopkins demonstrated psilocybin assisted psychotherapy to be effective in treating the symptoms of Depression. Both studies, I might add, were funded in part by The National Institute on Drug Abuse. I mention this because there is growing awareness on the national level that psilocybin assisted therapy when offered in a controlled environment by trained professionals is a viable method for treating severe mental illness, particularly in cases where the illness is resistant to other forms of treatment.

A single dose of psilocybin (which remains in the body for less than 6 hours) has in controlled settings, shown to produce an enduring decrease in depression symptoms lasting from 1 to 8 months, depending on client history and symptomatology. The outpatient psychotherapy I offer typically takes months, even years to produce similar symptom reduction. A portion of clients get better with psychotherapy alone. Some clients get better with a combination of medication and psychotherapy. And there are those who come to treatment who just don't get better. And this is where psilocybin assisted therapy comes in.

Depression is a disease which can be fatal when treatment fails. I have seen too many deaths from Depression to be satisfied with knowing I have done my best given the treatment options available to me. I am not comfortable with the status quo when it comes to treatment for mental illness. It is my belief that part of the stigma of mental illness is our failure to offer treatment which at least puts the disease in remission and at best offers a cure. Cancer used to carry stigma in the way mental illness does now; that was before we invested in research and expanded treatment options which made cancer treatable and at the same time 'talkable'. I have no reason to doubt that mental illness will some day be treatable, and possibly curable. I want to see the day when people with disabling Depression and suicidal thoughts have viable options. Psilocybin isn't a panacea, but the research points to the likelihood that it is the cutting edge of future treatment and perhaps cure for Depression and other severe and disabling forms of mental illness.

If you find yourself skeptical about hallucinogens as medicine, please do a quick google search of psilocybin assisted therapy and you will find we are no longer talking about an experimental treatment here, and we are most certainly not talking about getting high on magic mushrooms.

What is being proposed through the passage of LD 1582 is an opportunity to offer very ill people a clinic-centered treatment option staffed by trained medical and clinical therapy professionals who judiciously administer psilocybin in a controlled and safe environment. Psilocybin assisted psychotherapy offers patients a thorough step-by-step process of safe, supported treatment, integration guidance, and follow-up in the weeks and months following treatment. Psilocybin is medicine, not magic.

I am writing this testimony on the birthday of my dear friend, Christie, who would have been 51 today had she not died by suicide at age 29. When Christie died she had explored every treatment option available. She was so passionate about mental health she worked in public policy at SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration). And hardest of all for me; she met the love of her life just a year before she died. When I discovered that even deep love and commitment couldn't save Christie from Depression I knew I did not fully understand the insidiousness of this disease. Christie's death, like too many others who have died from complications of Depression, was not her fault. Depression is a serious and often fatal disease. Psilocybin assisted therapy is an opening to answers. It is time to broaden our thinking about Depression and look for a cure.

In closing I thank you for your time and encourage you to review the sources I have cited below to learn more about this cutting-edge treatment for mental illness.

- Amy Partridge-Barber, LCSW- Portland, Maine (LC6076)

## Resources

\*<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwiOkLOWx131AhXPkokeEHcLLA1cQFnoECA4QAAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.hopkinsmedicine.org%2Fnews%2Fnewsroom%2Fnews-releases%2Fpsilocybin-relieves-major-depression-study-shows&usg=AOvVaw0R2ExWhchmO6-82burayww>

\* <https://www.mountsinai.org/>

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\*([https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiU\\_Mavxd31AhUMkykEHaj0CUYQFnoECA4QAAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mountsinai.org%2Fabout%2Fnewsroom%2F2021%2Fmount-sinai-health-system-launches-center-for-psychedelic-research&usg=AOvVaw2VjeG1kQXnZ7RMrVA-KKae](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiU_Mavxd31AhUMkykEHaj0CUYQFnoECA4QAAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mountsinai.org%2Fabout%2Fnewsroom%2F2021%2Fmount-sinai-health-system-launches-center-for-psychedelic-research&usg=AOvVaw2VjeG1kQXnZ7RMrVA-KKae))

Amy Partridge-Barber  
Carabassett Valley  
LD 1582

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\*([https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiU\\_Mavxd31AhUMkYkEHaj0CUYQFnoECA4QAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mountsinai.org%2Fabout%2Fnewsroom%2F2021%2Fmount-sinai-health-system-launches-center-for-psychedelic-research&usg=AOvVaw2VjeGIkQXnZ7RMrVA-KKae](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiU_Mavxd31AhUMkYkEHaj0CUYQFnoECA4QAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mountsinai.org%2Fabout%2Fnewsroom%2F2021%2Fmount-sinai-health-system-launches-center-for-psychedelic-research&usg=AOvVaw2VjeGIkQXnZ7RMrVA-KKae))