

Judiciary Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7065

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DECRIMINALIZATION OF POSSESSION OF

Title: SMALL AMOUNTS OF PSILOCYBIN.

Vote Date: 4/4/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/7/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Judiciary Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Psilocybin has been proven to be an effective therapeutic for various mental illnesses. This bill would decriminalize small amounts of psilocybin not exceeding half an ounce.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Erin Doolittle, Director of Education at Connecticut for Psychedelic Medicine: She submitted testimony in support of this bill. She explained that as a trauma therapist, she has spent many years researching plant medicine and through her research, she has learned of the tremendous benefits of psilocybin mushrooms for the treatment of PTSD, addiction, depression, OCD, and anxiety disorders. She stated she has met many combat veterans who credit their psilocybin treatments with saving their lives. She believes that veterans and first responders should be able to receive the treatment they need to get better. She asked that the committee eliminate the proposed fines and threat of law enforcement so that Connecticut residents have protected, safe access to Psilocybin, a substance that is remarkably safe, well tolerated, and virtually impossible to become addicted to.

Duncan Markovich, Founder and Owner of Better Ways: He testified in support of the bill. He stated that the Psilocybin Informational Forum provided a lot of testimony and expertise that would be beneficial for committee members to read. He also suggested the committee

adopt language from HB 5456, which provides an additional framework that would enhance the bill.

Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel of American Civil Liberties Union of CT: She testified in support of this bill, stating the ACLU generally opposes the criminal prohibition of drugs, including psilocybin. She stated that prohibition as a drug control strategy is a proven failure, subjecting otherwise law-abiding citizens to arrest, prosecution, and incarceration for what they do in private. She believes that instead of arresting people for drug use, we should decriminalize and invest in drug prevention, research, education, and social programs that address substance abuse, permanent poverty, unemployment, and a lack of affordable housing. She referenced the legislature's Psilocybin Study Working Group, which researched the use of psilocybin as it relates to potential benefits to physical or mental well-being. She stated that based on their findings, psilocybin has promising health benefits for individuals' mental and physical well-being.

Samuel L. Evans, Community Organizer of Connecticut for Psychedelic Medicine: He submitted testimony in support of this bill with a few alterations to the language and sections regarding the ticketing system and fines. Additionally, he explained that as the bill is currently written, growing upwards of 14 grams is illegal he believes this is unrealistic since one planting of psilocybin can yield 28 grams or more. He believes that this bill is a decent starting point for the decriminalization of psilocybin but states that there are still essential provisions and changes to be made to increase the bill's efficacy.

Dr. Robert J. Stek, Retired Clinical Psychologist: He provided testimony in support of this bill, stating that throughout his career, he encountered several individuals who successfully used psychedelics to recover from addiction. He furthered that he has used psilocybin with clients to help them with their anxiety, depression, or PTSD. He explained that research on psychedelics demonstrates psilocybin is extremely safe and can have beneficial mental health effects.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Josiah Schlee, Cannabis Advocate: He submitted testimony in opposition to this bill, stating that it is the wrong time and place to focus on decriminalizing psilocybin, arguing that the focus should instead be on the continued arrest of cannabis users and requesting that the Judiciary Committee hold a public hearing on HB 6377. He furthered that unlawful and untraceable arrests of cannabis continue to take place and need to be stopped. He believes way to end the enforcement of nonviolent cannabis offenses requires the release of individuals affected by outdated laws, the creation of opportunities for communities affected by cannabis prohibition, and the education of law enforcement on cannabis-related matters.

Reported by: Lucy Sheldon

Date: April 8, 2025