



SCOTT WIENER
REPRESENTING SENATE DISTRICT 11

PRESS RELEASE

Senator Wiener Reintroduces Legislation To Decriminalize Psychedelics

DECEMBER 19, 2022

SACRAMENTO - Senator Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco) introduced Senate Bill 58, to decriminalize the possession and personal use of certain psychedelic drugs. SB 58 is backed by a broad coalition, including combat veterans.

Research from top medical universities shows that these substances can have significant benefits, particularly for treating mental health and substance use disorders, and decriminalizing their personal use is part of the larger movement to end the racist War on Drugs and its failed and destructive policies.

The following substances are included in SB 58: psilocybin, psilocyn, Dimethyltryptamine ("DMT"), mescaline (excluding peyote), and ibogaine. In 2021, Senator Wiener's psychedelics decriminalization legislation, SB 519, passed the Senate. It passed two Assembly Committees but then stalled in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

This legislation follows similar, successful local efforts to decriminalize these substances in Washington, D.C., Oakland, San Francisco, and Santa Cruz, as well as successful Oregon and Colorado ballot measures.

Studies show that psychedelics have great promise in treating mental health and substance use disorders. In two different clinical trials, psilocybin was shown to reduce symptoms in patients with treatment-resistant depression. A John Hopkins study showed a





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to psilocybin (the active ingredient in "magic mushrooms").

Observational studies have also documented the use of ayahuasca (which contains DMT) and ibogaine as potential treatments for substance use disorder. There's also evidence that psychedelics can help with smoking cessation.

In the past few years, the mental health and addiction **crises have worsened**. Since the onset of the pandemic, so many people have dealt with unemployment and financial distress, a lack of community and social isolation, and loss of friends or family — anxiety, depression, overdose and suicide rates are up across the country. With many people seeking treatment for these conditions, it's critical that we look to alternatives to criminalizing and incarcerating people who are using psychedelics to heal.

For veterans, many of whom live with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), access to psychedelics can be lifesaving. Veterans **die by suicide at a rate of 1.5 times** the general public. That's why Veterans Affairs is **studying** psychedelic therapy, and why so many **veterans are advocating** for the decriminalization of psychedelics.

SB 58 is sponsored by Heroic Hearts Project, a veteran service organization. Heroic Hearts connects veterans to psychedelic therapy for treating complex trauma. In the past few years, Heroic Hearts has become an international voice for veterans demanding effective mental health treatment options.

SB 58 is co-authored by Senator Josh Newman (D-Fullerton) and Assemblymembers Evan Low (D-Silicon Valley), Matt Haney (D-San Francisco), Isaac Bryan (D-Los Angeles), Lola Smallwood-Cuevas (D-Los Angeles), Alex Lee (D-Fremont), and Buffy Wicks (D-Oakland). Assemblymember Ash Kalra (D-San Jose) is a principal co-author.

"Psychedelics have tremendous capacity to help people heal, but right now, using them is a criminal offense," said **Senator Wiener**. "These drugs literally save lives and are some of the most promising treatments we have for PTSD, anxiety, depression, and addiction. We need to end the outdated, racist, failed War on Drugs and finally pursue drug policies that help people instead of incarcerating them."



"As a former law enforcement professional, I have seen what works



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enforcement to focus on the violent crime that threatens all of us, and it will give hope to first responders and many others that suffer from PTSD, depression by allowing personal use of psychedelic medicines for healing. We're in a mental health crisis, it's time California did something about it."

"Psychedelics helped healed the unseen scars from my 10 years of service in the War on Terror," said **California veteran and Heroic Hearts advocate Michael H. Young**. "This sacred plant medicine showed me how to put myself back together again. I am more whole now. I can love again. I am ready to serve my community again. Every veteran deserves responsible access to psychedelic healing modalities. Decriminalize psychedelics now!"

"Psychedelics represent the single most important breakthrough in mental health treatment in our lifetimes," said **Dr. Nathaniel Mills, Clinical Director, Sacramento Institute**. "Decriminalization of these medicines will create opportunities for healing for the people who need it the most."

"I was against psychedelics until I was in a dark place, and the V.A. helped me through psychedelic research with my severe PTSD," said **Courtney Ellington, the Executive Director of One Vet One Voice**. "When we decriminalize psychedelics, we help those who are trying to help themselves. Psychedelic decriminalization equals street drug prevention, suicide prevention, and an opportunity to build a better community."

Hanley Chan, the Director of Public Affairs for One Vet One Voice, added: "As an Asian American and a U.S. Navy veteran I use psychedelics to combat my depression and anxiety."

