

Judiciary Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6734

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DECRIMINALIZATION OF POSSESSION OF

Title: SMALL AMOUNTS OF PSILOCYBIN.

Vote Date: 3/30/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/1/2023

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. Individuals who are in possession of psilocybin in quantities less than half an ounce would not be subject to a class A misdemeanor as they would be under the law as it stands currently. It also stipulates that the burden of proof shall be by the preponderance of evidence except for in any trial for the alleged commission of a violation under section 2 of the act.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language amends 4a and 4b to clarify that the half ounce applies to psilocybin and not cannabis.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Chandra Campanelli, Registered Nurse: She supports this bill, stating that for something to be deemed criminal, there should be established evidence that it causes harm. She also states that propaganda led to the criminalization of psilocybin, and that there is no scientific evidence to support the strict controls over psilocybin. Further, she shares that psilocybin has been effective in treating mental health issues and disorders.

Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, ACLU-CT: She supports this bill, stating that no person should be prosecuted or remain in prison for drug-related crimes, nor as is the case with cannabis, should any person be burdened with a criminal history for the use of a now-decriminalized drug. She also stated that the criminal legal system is not equipped to deal with the issue of public health and that the prohibition of drugs is a proven failed drug control measure.

Aaron Romano, Attorney-at-Law: He supports this bill, stating that it is virtually impossible to overdose on psilocybin and cites a recent Yale study that supports the use of psilocybin in treating depression.

Kathy Dulac, Social Worker: She testified in support of the bill, stating that psilocybin would have extremely beneficial effects for those suffering from cancer, depression, or chronic pain especially for those approaching the end of their life.

Josiah Schlee: He testified in support of less incarceration for benign plants or fungi with proven medical benefits.

Lisa Capitani, Registered Nurse: She testified in support of the bill as it would have extremely beneficial effects for those suffering from cancer, depression, or chronic pain.

Joshua Frazer: He testified in support of the bill as it would prevent the unfair incarceration of individuals in disproportionately affected communities.

Samuel Evans, Students for Sensible Drug Policy: He testified in support of the bill as it would prevent the unfair incarceration of individuals in disproportionately affected communities.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Christopher Vereneau: He testified in opposition to the bill.

Reported by: James Angelopoulos

Date: April 3, 2023