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ADVANCING JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY SOLUTIONS

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Date: January 19, 2024

Re: Implementationof Psychedelic Medicines Working Group

Position: Support

To: Chair and Assemblywoman Brittney Miller, Vice Chair Senator Melanie Scheible, and the Nevada Judiciary Committee

Dear Chair Miller, Vice Chair Scheible and Distinguished Members of the Committee,

My name is Diane Goldstein, and I served for 21 years as a police officer retiring as the first female lieutenant in my agency. At the time of my retirement I was a division commander which included leading our peer counseling program and our crisis negotiations team. As a sergeant I led a multi-agency special investigations unit that focused on narcotics, gangs and career criminals. I am a constituent as well as the executive director of the Law Enforcement Action Partnership.

We are a nonprofit group of criminal justice professionals who speak from firsthand experience. Our mission is to make communities safer by focusing police resources on the greatest threats to public safety and working toward healing police-community relations.

Policing professionals in the United States have recognized we can no longer rely on arrest as a means to address a public health issue. Saving lives and reducing the crime and disorder caused by underlying problematic drug use are not mutually exclusive. A response that can achieve both ends requires a paradigm shift toward evidence-based practices that closely link public health and enforcement strategies with their most important outcomes saving lives.

Our state faces an unprecedented addiction crisis as our friends and relatives from every walk of life numb their underlying traumas with substance use. In our

communities, nearly three of our neighbors lose their lives to opioids and another two lose their lives to alcohol every single day, both among the highest rates in the country. While the situation can sometimes seem hopeless, treatments with psychedelics, such as psilocybin mushrooms, offer hope.

The Nevada legislature passed SB242, which will convene a Psychedelic Medicines Working Group to craft an actionable plan for legalizing therapeutic use as an issue of public health. This bill is historic and a first step towards saving lives by helping destigmatize cutting-edge treatments for the underlying mental health challenges that drive addiction.

The working group should also consider either the decriminalization of, or a reduction of penalties for personal amounts to help remove the stigma that prevents patients from reviewing dosage and preparation protocols with their therapists and doctors. Of the cities and jurisdictions that have decriminalized these naturally-occurring fungi, none have seen any significant public health or safety issues. In fact, in the United States sixty years ago, psychedelics were being researched widely prior to President Nixon's War on Drugs, which wrongly placed this class of substances under Schedule 1 without any evidence to support that designation.

Since people struggling with substance use disorder are statistically more likely to get wrapped up in criminal behavior, these benefits for mental and behavioral health can have big impacts on community health and public safety. And, for those who have already been arrested for a crime, psychedelics have been shown by a study of over 200,000 inmates to substantially reduce the likelihood of reoffending, particularly those who have a substance use problem. The bottom line is that people who can work through their traumas live happier, healthier, and more productive lives.

Additionally, a 2017 study reflects that lifetime psychedelic use was associated with a reduction of odds in committing past year criminal acts including property crime or violent crime. Plant based psychedelic use is so low that even in the annual (DEA) Drug Threat Assessments they historically have never been mentioned as a public safety concern. Notably the DEA is only reporting synthetic new psychoactive substances and does not list any of the substances that would be decriminalized in this bill.

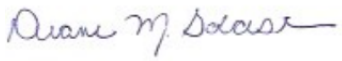
Fortunately, we have seen new research over the past decade that is helping to reduce the stigma associated with psychedelics. A peer-reviewed and controlled study of 44,000 Americans in the U.S. Journal of Psychopharmacology found that one dose of psilocybin mushrooms is associated with a 40% reduced risk of developing opioid use disorder. This finding was backed by a follow-up study that suggested an even stronger beneficial effect. Psychedelics can also catalyze introspective experiences that can help people understand why they are drinking excessively, helping people chart a new course for their lives.

Every Nevadan that suffers from PTSD, major depressive disorder, or substance use disorder stands to benefit from access to these breakthrough therapies. This is particularly true for first responders, including law enforcement, who suffer traumatic stress at a rate five times higher than that of civilians, have some of the

highest rates of spillover violence that results in excessive use of force or in domestic violence, and alcoholism and substance use disorder. We owe it to these public servants to study and implement these alternative treatments so they have the choice to heal rather than just numb themselves to the daily traumas they experience on the job.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience in support of the implementation of SB 242

Respectfully,



Diane Goldstein
Redondo Beach Police Department
Executive Director, The Law Enforcement Action Partnership