

## **Public Commentary for the Nevada Senate Judiciary Meeting**

**By Bryan H. Lang**

19 January 2024

Chair Miller, Vice Chair Scheible, and the members of the NV Judiciary Committee:

My name is Bryan Lang, a Nevada resident, harm reduction specialist, and an author of the Denver Psilocybin Mushroom Policy Review Panel 2021 Comprehensive Report.

Thank you for considering the discussions today on psychedelics.

First, let us be clear. It is the duty of law enforcement to enforce the laws, and psilocybin is currently a Schedule I drug federally deemed illegal in all states.

In prior testimony today, it was reported that in 2023, 75,000 grams of psilocybin were seized by law enforcement. That's 165 pounds.

An average person using psilocybin for personal use would be in possession of one to four grams of psilocybin mushrooms. Assuming the upper limit of four grams, that's 18,750 uses.

At a very conservative 5% usage level, that's the equivalent of about two nights psilocybin mushroom use at Electronic Daisy Carnival in Las Vegas.

If I recall correctly, in previous testimony around SB 242, it was reported that most of the Nevada arrests around psilocybin involved people trafficking in multiple illegal drugs, of which psilocybin mushrooms was just another one of their illegal product offerings.

For the existing or the new case management system cited earlier, it would be exceptionally useful to query how much of the psilocybin seizures related to individual possession versus drug trafficking, and specifically, multi-drug trafficking.

Over the course of testimony around SB 242, you've heard passionate stories from citizens, veterans, and law enforcement staff regarding the mental health benefits they have received through the use of psilocybin. Unless they traveled overseas, as Jon Dalton and over 1,700 veterans have done when their own country has failed to treat them, these passionate stories arise from illegal use.

**The issue that faces our lawmakers: what are the risks and rewards of any decriminalization measures? Do the benefits presented outweigh the concerns presented?**

On a national level, 150 people in the US die daily from fentanyl overdose. A comprehensive literature review has attributed one confirmed death from psilocybin overdose ever -- a woman who had a heart transplant ten years prior -- and three other suspected deaths. Ever.

In testimony by Professor Hines today, he presented the rate of people taking drugs who sought emergency medical attention. Psilocybin mushrooms was reported as 4/10 of 1 percent over 11,000 respondents.

As stated in the 2021 Psilocybin Mushroom Policy Review Panel report, the panel -- which included Denver Sheriff Captain Jamison Brown, Denver Division Chief of Police Joseph Montoya, and District Attorney Beth McCain -- stated unanimously that decriminalizing

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psilocybin mushrooms in Denver has not since presented any significant public health or safety risk in the city.

As former Lieutenant Goldstein and Dr. Tabaac and testified earlier today, psilocybin has been shown to reduce the risk of opioid use disorder by 40%, to reduce the probability of reoffending of incarcerated inmates, and reduce the used to mitigate to reduce the odds of anyone committing criminal acts including property crime and violent crime. Further, psychedelic-assisted therapies have shown promising results in addressing mental health conditions such as PTSD, depression, anxiety, and addiction.

According to a 2021 report from the Pew Research Center, the opioid epidemic is currently incurring some \$35 billion a year in healthcare costs, \$14.8 billion in criminal justice costs, and \$92 billion in lost productivity, or \$141.8 billion in total. For comparison's sake, that total is \$30 billion more than the federal government spent on food assistance programs in 2021, and more than seven times the estimated cost to end homelessness according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Psilocybin -- despite having been used at least once by approximately 10% of the entire US population -- incurs almost zero of these costs.

Our mental health statistics in the US and in Nevada are dire. Existing solutions are not working. Our FDA has designated psilocybin as a breakthrough therapy. Oregon and Australia have already legalized it and MDMA for therapeutic use. We in Nevada can do better.

I strongly urge you to support expeditiously appointing the remaining positions of the SB 242 panel, so that it may carefully contrast the possible risks of decriminalization of psilocybin versus the potential for overall public health benefit to our residents.