

FAV Testimony for SB1009-Task Force on Responsible Use of Natural Psychedelic Substances

My name is Hannah Glassman, I'm a resident of Columbia, MD, an active duty military spouse, and a practicing licensed psychotherapist trained in psychedelic assisted therapies. I support SB1009.

Personally, a psychedelic experience saved my life. It bought me time to recover from a life threatening eating disorder and a planned suicide. This eventually led me to helping others heal.

Eating disorders and many other mental illnesses are rooted in psychological rigidity. Clinical trials overwhelmingly show that psychedelics increase psychological flexibility.

Marylanders have been and are seeking therapy with these substances for a range of mental health conditions. Under the current laws, as a licensed psychotherapist, I can only act to reduce harm. I prepare clients for their independent use of psychedelics and then I help them make sense of what they've experienced. Unfortunately, I cannot be there with my clients when they take these substances, despite their desire for support. When I reply "I cannot legally do that" to their request, sometimes they "go underground" and work with a facilitator that may not be adequately trained and where there is no oversight of the work they do.

Harm can occur without proper education for patients and training for facilitators. While I believe that people can safely independently use psychedelics, they are at risk of harm while in an altered state. For example, they may consent to something they otherwise would not. Therapists and facilitators working with people under the influence of psychedelics should be properly trained and a review board should be able to investigate complaints. The Task Force created by the bill will study and make recommendations for training and oversight requirements that will increase the safety and efficacy of psychedelic-assisted therapy.

The Task Force will also be responsible for recommending a system that enables broad, equitable, and affordable access to natural psychedelic substances. This approach is critical to ensure that underserved, over-incarcerated, and chronically traumatized communities in Maryland will have access to psychedelic medicines. This is an opportunity to help marginalized communities heal, including veterans.

This isn't a partisan issue as data shows both Republicans and Democrats overwhelmingly believe making these substances accessible is "morally right." Freedom to heal in our own country is morally right, yet many veterans have to leave the country to get the treatment they need to survive, that they deserve.

I worry about my husband's future care once he leaves the Navy. I won't speak to his current or past struggles publicly, but I can certainly say that I would feel much more comfortable knowing these substances could be treatment options when others have failed or have disappointed. I worry about my friends and family with combat trauma and traumatic brain injuries, some with early onset dementia due to special operations work. Without a task force, I worry that help won't get to them soon enough.

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In closing, I am in full support for establishing a task force to protect Marylanders from undue harm while investigating the potential benefit for Maryland's biological, social, psychological, and fiscal health. Please vote in favor of SB1009.

Thank you all for your attention and consideration.

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