



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 548: Task Force on the Use of Natural Psychedelic
Substances**

February 21st, 2024

Good afternoon, Madam Chair, Madam Vice-Chair and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. I'm Delegate Pam Guzzone representing Howard County's District 13 and I am here in support of House Bill 548.

I have often thought that I'm not the person who would immediately come to mind as someone who would be introducing this bill. After all, I'm a pretty straight-laced, college educated woman with graying hair and no significant health concerns. But, here I am asking you for a favorable report on a bill – HB 548 – to establish a task force on responsible use of natural psychedelics.

My panel will provide more detailed information, so I will simply share a few of the reasons I believe this task force is needed and needed now.

- First and foremost, treatments using psychedelic substances are expected to be approved, for (specifically) treatment resistant PTSD, by the FDA before the end of 2024. Thus, thinking through the 'who, what, when' issues needs to happen sooner rather than later.
- Additionally, there are lessons learned from the cannabis legislative process which can be applied to psychedelics. I am pleased that the Maryland Cannabis Administration is willing and able to staff task force and can do so within its existing resources.
- Depression, anxiety, addiction, PTSD, and chronic pain are all conditions that, in clinical trials, have been shown to be treated effectively with psychedelics. The research shows that psychedelics are safe, have very limited side-effects, and depending on the condition, resolve conditions with as few as one or two treatments thereby eliminating long-term reliance on other drugs. There has been more clinical research on psychedelics – including double blind studies – than there has been on cannabis.

And of course, these substances have been used for hundreds if not thousands of years around the world for their healing powers. It is time for us to move psychedelics out of the shadows and add it to the toolbox of treatments for the thousands of people suffering with conditions so debilitating that people can't work, families break down, and medical expenses become overwhelming. This task force is the first step in that process.

For these reasons and more, I respectfully request a positive report on HB 548.