

## **In favor (FAV) of HB0548**

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Hello, my name is John Harrison. I am in favor of HB0548 in its current form.

I've been a Maryland resident for 43 years. I am 66 years old and recently retired from the federal government after devoting 24 years of my life protecting public health and safety.

Just prior to realizing our hard-earned retirement dreams, my wife and I were defrauded out of my federal government retirement fund, plus the value of our home, which was already paid off. The moment I realized that we lost all of that money (over \$1.2M) and that our life-long retirement plans suddenly vanished, I became so distraught that I started shaking uncontrollably. With the help of my wife, I soon met with a psychiatrist who immediately prescribed Prozac and Gabapentin.

With no initial relief from those medications, the psychiatrist continued to increase the dose of both. With each dosage increase, my situation continued to get worse, and ending my life became an increasingly attractive solution. I could no longer bear the level of anger, anxiety, guilt, personal failure, resentment, regret, etc., and the side effects of the medications destroyed all remaining sources of joy.

Desperate for any help, I went to a local cannabis dispensary. But because of my security clearance, I could not risk taking any of the dispensary's potentially helpful products because I would have to continue to work for many more years just to pay the bills, and the next drug test would end my ability to do so. If that happened, there's no telling what I would have done, or how many other souls would have been severely impacted. Fortunately, the dispensary employee shared with me that he had treatment-resistant depression which he was finally able to overcome through the use of psilocybin mushrooms, something that my employer's drug test would not detect. Finally, a gleam of hope.

So, there I was, a faithful public servant entrusted with protecting public health and safety on a national scale, having to seek out an uncontrolled illegal substance from some stranger, who by selling me psilocybin would also be committing an illegal act, of which I would be complicit. On the other hand, this nation's health care system failed me once again, but this time my life was at stake, and this appeared to be the only viable option left, so I pursued it while deeply regretting having to do so.

Luckily, I found a wonderful person who at great personal risk responsibly administers psilocybin during a deeply spiritual ceremony. She assured me that this sacred plant medicine would reveal to me what I needed to know about my life and what is truly most important. And it did! The revelations during this sacred ceremony were quite vivid, cathartic, and life-saving. This also introduced me to microdosing psilocybin (which is taking psilocybin at sub-perceptible levels) which just made me want to get things done and to live life more fully! A true gift from mother earth except that it has been deemed to provide no beneficial medical use. I imagine that millions of this nation's citizens would disagree.

There is a growing culture in Maryland that is recognizing the benefits of responsible and properly administered doses of psilocybin, along with realizing the benefits of microdosing. And, more and more highly worthwhile citizens of Maryland are consciously willing to take the legal risks of using psilocybin. That's because the benefits to the person consuming psilocybin are so great. And please recognize that those benefits, in the form of motivation and compassion, ripple out to all those around that person.

Because of my past experience with psilocybin, I became a more grateful, loving, positive, and supportive person, and we finally started enjoying our retirement.

Please give this matter your utmost consideration and please vote in favor of HB0548. Thank you.