

Supporting HB0548

Good afternoon,

My name is David Jun Selleh. I support HB0548 in its current format.

I am a Maryland resident of Montgomery County, District 9A. I am a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor in Maryland, holding a Master of Arts Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. I offer Psychedelic-Assisted Psychotherapy in Baltimore, MD, with sliding scale fees on a limited basis. I have organized and facilitated a variety of psychedelic education, harm-reduction, and peer-support events at the community level. I am also the son of a retired US Army Colonel, who served from 1978-2017.

In my work as a psychedelic-informed psychotherapist I have witnessed the utility of psychedelics as a tool for facilitating and accelerating healing, growth, and change. I have also personally experienced healing within my family system through psychedelics, which helped repair in the aftermath of a suicidal and treatment-resistant depressed brother, a high-conflict divorce, and the impact of my father's multiple deployments.

I urge the committee to support the creation of Maryland's Task Force on Responsible Use of Natural Psychedelics.

Psychedelic treatment options are coming—and by many definitions they are already here. Psychedelic substances have been used for millennia by global cultures in healing ceremonies. More recently, the Food and Drug Administration designated psilocybin as a “breakthrough therapy” for treatment resistant depression. The Department of Defense is funding psychedelic research for military and veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or Traumatic Brain Injury. The scientific and medical communities currently have a wealth of research that consistently illustrates the safety and benefits of psychedelic treatment, including efficacy in reducing suicidality, drug and alcohol addiction, chronic headache, chronic pain, anxiety, eating disorder, and other indications. Furthermore, legislation increasing access to psychedelic substances has already been enacted in Colorado, Oregon, and Washington D.C., and numerous local jurisdictions, each with vastly different models of regulation.

Amidst this resurgence of psychedelic medicines, many have raised important concerns. Some have concerns about the medical industry inadvertently reducing access for people with lower socioeconomic status or limited insurance coverage, or pigeonholing patients into standardized treatment regimens that may not fit for everyone. Some have concerns about the systems for appropriately licensing and supervising facilitators. Some have concerns about people and marginalized communities who have been incarcerated or otherwise penalized for offenses that are inconsistent with the state of current science. Some have concerns about the significant population of people currently utilizing psychedelic substances responsibly but lacking education or a safe, controlled, and regulated market.

In service of addressing these and other concerns, Task Forces have been implemented in numerous other states. Task Forces have the distinct benefits of considering a diverse range of perspectives, ensuring inclusive understanding, and representing multiple interests, including public health, mental health, research, veteran affairs, law enforcement, drug policy, religious use, underserved communities, and more. A Task Force is the best way to maximize public benefit, mitigate risks, and to research and recommend what model is best for the unique needs of Maryland.

I urge the committee to vote favorably on HB548 and support the creation of Maryland's Task Force on Responsible Use of Natural Psychedelics.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DS' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line.

David Jun Selleh
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