

Activists push for magic mushroom decriminalization in DC

[July 8,] activists presented more than 36,000 signatures to the [Washington DC] Board of Elections. If the signatures hold up through the verification process, voters in the nation's capital will face a November ballot initiative that would decriminalize psilocybin "magic" mushrooms and other natural psychedelics like mescaline.

If passed, it would be the first of its kind for an Eastern city; Denver became [the first U.S. city to pass such an initiative](#) in May 2019, with the California cities of Oakland and Santa Cruz following suit. It would also likely face efforts in Congress to overturn or block its implementation.

Activists are deemphasizing the recreational aspects of the drugs, focusing on the therapeutic and medical benefits as treatment for depression, trauma and addiction.

"D.C. could really lead the way on this," said campaign manager Melissa Lavasani. "You shouldn't bear the repercussions of the drug war while you are healing yourself."

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The proposed D.C. ballot initiative would apply to psilocybin mushrooms, iboga, mescaline and ayuhuasca but not to peyote or to human-made psychedelics like LSD. It would instruct the Metropolitan Police Department to treat such substances as a low priority. If successful, Lavasani said she envisions patients being able to consume such substances in controlled circumstances and in consultation with doctors or therapists.

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