



Proposition 122: The decriminalization and regulation of certain plants and fungi with psychedelic effects

Student Voter Information Guide

Today the use of psychedelics is often viewed in a negative light. However, Indigenous people have been using them for their medicinal properties throughout history. In the 20th century, a man by the name of Albert Hoffman discovered how to synthesize lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD). He would also be the first man to experience its effects. His research would soon come to a halt due to the government's war on drugs that occurred during the 1970s and 80s, even though there was little evidence suggesting detrimental risk caused by LSD. Instead, there was substantial evidence that supported the therapeutic potential of psychedelics. The stigma around psychedelics would remain a barrier to research until modern organizations began to advocate for and educate people about the benefits of psychedelics. Now research institutions host “clinical trials with MDMA-assisted therapy for the treatment of PTSD, alcoholism, and social anxiety, and psilocybin clinical studies for depression and addiction” (PubMed).

A yes vote on proposition 122 would decriminalize (criminal and civil immunity) the possession, use, and sale of such substances (*2022 Ballot Information Book*)

Voting yes on proposition 122 could have many benefits. The medical community has already noticed many healing properties psychedelics have. For example, John Hopkins medical institution's research has shown that “psychedelic treatment with psilocybin relieved major depressive disorder symptoms in adults” (Hopkins medicine). An additional psychological benefit of psilocybin is help with alcohol addictions. Through studies we've seen, people diagnosed with alcohol dependency experience a decrease in alcohol craving after receiving four small doses of psilocybin over the course of 36 weeks (Bogenschutz et. al.). In one study, cancer patients volunteered to help study psilocybin's impact on their anxiety and depression. The study found that psilocybin had faster and more effective results in comparison to the popular anxiety and depression medications that are used today (Johnson, M.W., Griffiths, R.R.).

A no vote on proposition 122 would mean that the current state law on the possession, use, and sale of such substances will remain in effect (*2022 Ballot Information Book*). It is important to note that as of 2019, Colorado moved to decriminalize certain schedule I and II substances. The possession of certain psychedelics in certain amounts is classified as a misdemeanor charge in most instances, as opposed to a felony charge (Offense Level for Controlled Substance Possession).

There is also some risk when it comes to proposition 122. When any drug is made readily available there will be more potential for abuse. Psychedelics outside of a controlled environment can be very problematic. In some cases, psilocybin can cause overwhelmed, anxious, or confused reactions. In unmonitored settings these people can be at risk of dangerous behaviors in reaction to these feelings (Johnson, M.W., Griffiths, R.R.). Long term effects of irresponsible use of psychedelics include “visual disturbances, disorganized thinking, paranoia, and mood changes” (Nida).

Proposition 122 seeks to address issues of decriminalization, community mental health, and substance use. Voting yes will legalize the use, possession, and distribution of these plant derived psychedelics. Decriminalization of these drugs will allow further research, psychological medicinal benefits, and cultural healing practices. It will also allow for further provisions guaranteeing criminal and civil immunity. Voting no will maintain the current standing statutes on possession, use and distribution. In Colorado, this is typically a misdemeanor charge as opposed to a felony charge.

Guide by Robin Schichtel, Ari Lakshin, Caribeth Gundran

Thank you to student researchers in Introduction to Political Science and volunteers from the League of Women Voters of La Plata County for producing this guide.

Works Cited

2022 Ballot Information Book. https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/blue_book_2022_english_for_web.pdf.

B;,, Doblin RE;Christiansen M;Jerome L;Burge. "The Past and Future of Psychedelic Science: An Introduction to This Issue." *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31132970/#:~:text=Psychedelic plants and fungi have,first person to ingest LSD.

"Hallucinogens DrugFacts." *National Institutes of Health*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 29 Sept. 2022, nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/hallucinogens.

"Offense Level for Controlled Substance Possession." *Offense Level For Controlled Substance Possession | Colorado General Assembly*, 3 May 2019, <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb19-1263>. Johnson, M.W., Griffiths, R.R. Potential Therapeutic Effects of Psilocybin. *Neurotherapeutics* 14, 734–740 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13311-017-0542-y>

Bogenschutz MP, Forcehimes AA, Pommy JA, Wilcox CE, Barbosa P, Strassman RJ. Psilocybin-assisted treatment for alcohol dependence: A proof-of-concept study. *Journal of Psychopharmacology*. 2015;29(3):289-299. doi:[10.1177/0269881114565144](https://doi.org/10.1177/0269881114565144)

