

# California Panel OKs Psilocybin Test for Veterans

## California Inches Closer to Launching Psilocybin Pilot Program Aimed at Helping Veterans and First Responders with PTSD and Trauma

In a move signaling growing bipartisan support for psychedelic-assisted therapy, a second California Senate committee has approved a bill to launch a groundbreaking psilocybin pilot program tailored for military veterans and first responders. The legislation, Senate Bill 751, co-authored by Sen. Josh Becker (D) and Senate Minority Leader Brian Jones (R), cleared the Senate Education Committee in a unanimous 6-0 vote this Wednesday.

The bill, which passed its first Senate committee just a week prior, now heads to the Senate Appropriations Committee for further consideration. If enacted, it could mark a pivotal shift in California's approach to trauma treatment by exploring the therapeutic potential of psilocybin in a tightly regulated academic setting.

### Bipartisan Momentum Grows as Lawmakers Respond to Veteran Mental Health Crisis

Sen. Brian Jones, a Republican, acknowledged the stigma-breaking nature of his support, noting that several years ago, he would have never imagined backing a psilocybin initiative.

California's position as home to globally respected research universities and medical institutions, he argued, makes the state uniquely equipped to implement such a pilot program responsibly.

### University of California System to Oversee Five-County Psilocybin Pilot Program

As amended by the Senate Health Committee last week, SB 751 calls for the University of California system to oversee the pilot, which would be established in partnership with licensed clinics across up to five counties.

Responsibilities assigned to participating UC institutions include:

Designing clinical protocols

Securing institutional review board (IRB) approvals

Training facilitators to administer psilocybin in therapeutic settings

Gathering data on treatment outcomes

Submitting detailed reports to the legislature

The program would specifically serve veterans and former first responders suffering from trauma-related mental health conditions, offering them access to supervised psilocybin therapy under medical oversight.

## **Dedicated Research Fund to Support Program Implementation and Data Collection**

The bill also establishes a dedicated “Veterans and First Responders Research Pilot Special Fund,” a continuously appropriated account designed to finance the program’s operation and research. This financial support will help ensure that institutions can carry out ethical, rigorous research while maintaining safety and transparency.

The bill’s legislative findings reference emerging studies showing the potential benefits of psilocybin in treating PTSD, depression, and other mental health disorders. However, the bill emphasizes that treatments must occur under proper supervision to guarantee safety and uphold ethical standards.

## **Pilot Report Expected by 2030 to Inform Future Psychedelic Therapy Policy**

If passed, the University of California would be required to compile program data and submit a comprehensive report to the legislature by **January 15, 2030**. The report would include recommendations for potential policy adjustments and future access to psilocybin therapy.

This long-term timeline underscores the legislature’s focus on building a cautious, evidence-based foundation for future psychedelic-assisted treatment policies, especially amid broader national conversations about mental health care and alternative therapies.

## **A Measured Psychedelic Policy Shift in California After Setbacks**

California’s road to psychedelic reform has been uneven in recent years. In 2023, Governor Gavin Newsom (D) vetoed a broader bill that would have decriminalized the possession of various psychedelics, citing concerns about safety and regulatory readiness.

In response, lawmakers drafted more conservative, research-focused proposals like SB 751. This approach has drawn broader bipartisan support and reduced political resistance by focusing narrowly on therapy for high-need groups in regulated clinical environments.

In parallel, Assemblymember Marie Waldron (R) led a separate psychedelics bill that aimed to promote research and establish a framework for regulated therapeutic access. That bill moved through the Assembly with unanimous support last year.

## **Broader Implications for National Psychedelic Therapy Reform**

California’s pilot program could serve as a model for other states considering similar legislation. With other jurisdictions like Oregon and Colorado leading the way in legalizing and regulating psychedelics for therapeutic use, California’s careful, academic-centered approach may offer a more politically viable path for other large states to follow.

Meanwhile, in Texas, lawmakers are also considering bills to speed up access to psychedelic-assisted therapy for veterans, pending federal approval. The growing momentum on both coasts reflects rising national interest in addressing veteran suicide and PTSD through innovative treatment options.

## **A New Era in Mental Health Care for Veterans and First Responders**

If passed, SB 751 could open the door for thousands of California veterans and first responders to access potentially life-changing mental health treatment. By combining bipartisan support, university oversight, and cautious implementation, the bill represents a significant step toward integrating psychedelic-assisted therapy into mainstream mental health care.

As California continues to lead on health innovation, the success of this pilot program could not only improve lives but also help shape the national conversation around trauma, therapy, and the role of psychedelics in modern medicine.

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