

Advocates Push for Psychedelics Legalization on California's 2026 Ballot

Psychedelics policy reform advocates in California are calling for a ballot initiative to legalize certain drugs including psilocybin and MDMA after legislative attempts at change failed to cross the finish line two years in a row. Last year, California lawmakers approved a bill from Democratic state Senator Scott Wiener that would have allowed regulated access to certain psychedelic substances. However, California Governor Gavin Newsom vetoed the legislation in October, calling on the legislature to instead pass regulations to govern the therapeutic use of psychedelic drugs.

New Bill Faces Roadblocks

Wiener responded earlier this year with a new bill he co-authored with several Senate colleagues to regulate the therapeutic use of psychedelics. But that measure is now apparently dead for the legislative session after a Senate committee failed to advance the bill earlier this month. After two unsuccessful bids at psychedelics reform in the legislature, advocates for change, including Wiener, are considering a ballot initiative to allow voters to decide the issue.

“We are not giving up, whether that means introducing a new bill or ballot measure, this issue is not going away,” Wiener told KQED public television news after the bill’s demise. “We know these substances are helping people turn their lives around.”

Ballot Initiative for 2026

Wiener said that the psychedelics legalization ballot measure would likely appear on the ballot for the 2026 general election. He added that he may also return to the legislature with another bill, noting that both avenues of change can be pursued simultaneously.

Psychedelics advocates are considering whether a potential ballot measure should be broader than the bill to regulate the therapeutic use of the drugs sought by Newsom and are looking to the governor to take a leadership position on the issue.

“We hope Governor Newsom puts his action where his mouth is. He’s the one that suggested this bill. Now is the time for him to also be a leader in this space and help us find a path forward,” former Army Ranger Jesse Gould told KQED.

Advocating for Change

In 2017, Gould launched the Heroic Heart Project to help fellow military veterans gain access to psychedelics-assisted therapeutic services. Many vets seek out such services in foreign countries where regulations are more permissive to treat post-traumatic stress disorder or other mental health challenges. Others make use of unregulated therapists in the United States. Advocates for change say all paths to reform

are still under consideration.

“All options are on the table. A ballot measure certainly is,” Gould said. “It’s clear that if the politicians won’t speak for their people then we need to bring this to the people. And this is a popular subject for voters in California.”

Growing Support for Psychedelics Reform

Support for psychedelics policy reform is growing nationwide, with cities including Seattle, San Francisco, Denver, and Washington, D.C. passing ordinances to effectively decriminalize possession of some psychedelic drugs. Public opinion surveys show strong support for reform, including a 2023 U.C. Berkeley poll showing that 61% of American registered voters support legalizing the therapeutic use of psychedelics.

“Californians will continue to seek out psychedelics for all sorts of reasons, including to help alleviate mental health challenges like PTSD, depression, and anxiety. Many will do so without guided support and use psychedelics on their own, which increases risks,” said Jared Moffat, Campaign Director for the Alliance for Safer Use of Psychedelics, in a statement. “We’re not backing down, and will keep pushing to ensure facilitated access to psychedelics becomes a reality in California and that Californians are protected from harm.”

Continuing the Fight

The calls for a psychedelics legalization ballot measure come less than two weeks after Wiener’s most recent legislation, Senate Bill 1012, was rejected by a legislative committee in the upper chamber of the California state legislature. Despite the failure, the San Francisco Democrat vowed to renew the fight. But future legislation could be a hard sell with state leaders facing shortfalls in the upcoming budget.

“We’ve been working for four years to legalize access to psychedelics in California, to bring these substances out of the shadows and into the sunlight, and to improve safety and education around their use,” Wiener said in a May 16 statement after the Senate Appropriations Committee declined to advance the bill. “We’re in a terrible budget year, where all bills with significant costs are at risk. Nevertheless, it’s disappointing for this bill not to move forward. Psychedelics have massive promise in helping people heal and get their lives back on track. It makes enormous sense for California to lead in creating regulated access under the supervision of a licensed professional. I’m highly committed to this issue, and we’ll continue to work on expanding access to psychedelics.”

Email: info@cannabisriskmanager.com | Phone: +415-226-4060

© Copyright 2025 Cannabis Risk Manager. All Rights Reserved