

**OPEN, SIGN, AND RETURN TODAY
NO STAMP REQUIRED**



OFFICIAL VOTER INITIATIVE 81 ENCLOSED

DC DEMOCRACY BY MAIL 2020

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Paid for by the Campaign to Decriminalize Nature DC, Adam Edinger, Treasurer, 2448 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20008
A copy of our report is filed with the Director of Campaign Finance of the District of Columbia Board of Elections



*Decriminalize
Nature DC*



REFORM LAWS FOR PLANT MEDICINES IN DC

Dear Neighbor,

My name is Melissa Lavasani and I need your help to give D.C. voters the opportunity to vote on Initiative 81 and keep our democracy moving in these difficult times. The current public health emergency has made traditional signature gathering impossible, so I am asking you to sign and return the enclosed petition in support of placing Initiative 81 on the November ballot. If passed, Initiative 81 would make natural plant and fungi medicines among the lowest priorities of the Metropolitan Police Department.

I'm a Ward 6 resident, the mother of two children, a D.C. government employee, a native Washingtonian, and the proposer of Initiative 81, the "Entheogenic Plant and Fungus Policy Act of 2020." I proposed this initiative because my own experiences made clear the urgent need for reform. After the birth of my second child, I suffered from crippling postpartum depression. Plant and fungi medicines -- not pharmaceuticals -- were the only treatment that provided relief and allowed me to heal. These natural entheogens enabled me to work, take care of my family, and affirm the joys of being alive. Initiative 81 would make a small change: shifting enforcement of laws against natural plant medicines to be among the lowest law enforcement priorities. This change would help me and thousands of other D.C. residents suffering from anxiety, PTSD, addiction, or depression who currently fear arrest or prosecution for pursuing healing through natural, entheogenic substances. The initiative has the support of prominent medical professionals, police officers, and D.C. residents.

I am asking you to sign and return this petition by MAY 31st.

In this envelope, you will find the official circulating petition, instructions on how to sign, testimonials, and a return envelope with prepaid postage.

Our website, www.DecrimNatureDC.org/petition has more information about Initiative 81 as well as how to correctly sign and return this petition. If you need additional help, or have any questions, please call our hotline: 202-733-4640.

Sincerely,

Melissa Lavasani



 **DECRI MNATUREDC.ORG**

“Recent clinical trials demonstrate the powerful therapeutic uses of various psychedelic substances, particularly psilocybin, in relieving refractory anxiety and depression in terminally ill patients.”

Mikhail Kogan, MD Medical Director, *GW Center for Integrative Medicine*

“Patients with advanced-stage cancer suffering from treatment resistant anxiety and/or depression experienced significant reductions in both anxiety and depression with improvements of mood following a single guided psilocybin treatment, with no safety concerns or clinically significant adverse events. Other studies demonstrate efficacy of other psychedelic agents to relieve anxiety and stress disorders related to end of life. Therapy with psilocybin is well tolerated by seriously ill patients and, for some, remarkably effective in alleviating non-physical distress. Therapeutic benefits often persist long after any pharmacologic effect of the drug. **It is time to support the legitimate therapeutic use of psychedelics.**”



Uneeda Nichols Native Washingtonian, Ward 8 resident

“I am a DC Native, a DCMJ advocate, and an MBA holder who has successfully managed and owned businesses across DC. Before incorporating entheogens into my life, I suffered from anxiety and headaches caused by trauma. **My health and quality of life have greatly improved since I started exploring plant medicine.**”



Wyly Gray Founding Director, *Veterans of War*

“Clinical trials have repeatedly shown that entheogenic plants and fungi can reprogram trauma, repair neurotransmitters, and stimulate the growth of new neurons. As a former Marine who found relief in entheogens and runs a nonprofit to help fellow veterans do the same, **I ask that you sign the enclosed petition to help those seeking natural treatments for PTSD and other post-combat challenges.**”



Major Neill Franklin (Ret.) Executive Director
Law Enforcement Action Partnership

“Many prescription drugs are not regulated enough, while plant medicines are controlled by illegal markets that can make their use more dangerous. In a time of rampant opioid overdoses, police and veteran suicides caused by PTSD, and an unaddressed mental health crisis in this country, **no one should go to jail for using a natural medicine to try to heal themselves.**”



Daniel Carcillo Two-time NHL Stanley Cup Winner, Founder, *Chapter 5 Foundation*

“Entheogens helped me process emotional and physical trauma in hours rather than years. Mushrooms helped me forgive myself, break destructive thought patterns, and my guide taught me how to integrate the lessons into my everyday life. Now, I have deeper and more loving relationships with my wife, family, and myself. I am thankful for plant and fungi medicines.”



Lia Kuduk, JD Ward 1 Resident, Founder, *LookOut Counsel LLC*

“Plant medicines helped me realize my challenges with episodic anxiety, depression, and suicidality stemmed from adverse childhood experiences. I am now proud of my life as an intersex, transfeminine person dedicated to nurturing the good in others. Dismantling punitive barriers to accessing entheogens will improve the wellbeing of the most marginalized and least resourced members of our communities.”



Sign the Ballot Initiative 81 Petition

Questions? Visit www.DecrimNatureDC.org/petition or call 202-733-4640

What are you asking me to sign?

Enclosed with this letter is an official petition from the DC Board of Elections for Initiative 81. Every registered DC voter can sign the petition. **We are asking that you have every DC voter in your household sign the petition and send it back to us by May 31st.**

Why are you asking me to sign?

If at least 30,000 DC voters sign this petition by July 6, 2020, then voters will have the opportunity to vote for Initiative 81 in DC's general election on Tuesday, November 3, 2020.

What is the Campaign to Decriminalize Nature DC?

The Campaign to Decriminalize Nature DC is a political campaign organized by DC residents seeking to lower the law enforcement priorities for entheogenic plant medicines such as mushrooms, cacti, iboga containing plants, and/or DMT-containing plants and preparations, such as Ayahuasca. **Signing and mailing back this petition is the first step towards ensuring safe and equitable access for all people to entheogenic plants and fungi.** The campaign was launched in December 2019 when Melissa Lavasani filed a voter initiative with the DC Board of Elections titled the "Entheogenic Plant and Fungus Policy Act of 2020," which is also known as Initiative 81.

What is an Entheogen?

An entheogen is a plant medicine that helps people to reconnect to nature and their deeper authentic selves, process difficult and traumatic emotions and experiences, and break destructive patterns of thought and behavior. Entheogens are naturally occurring and have been consumed for millennia by humans. In many cultures they are sacred and some entheogens are already recognized as such by existing U.S. law.

Does the Initiative Legalize or Reduce Penalties for Entheogens?

No. The Campaign to Decriminalize Nature DC simply seeks to have the Metropolitan Police Department make entheogens among their lowest law enforcement priorities and codify a non-binding public call upon the DC Attorney General and U.S. Attorney for DC to cease prosecution of criminal charges involving entheogens..

Entheogenic plants and fungi have profound medical and social benefits.

Leading medical research facilities, such as Johns Hopkins, New York University, UCLA and the Imperial College in London, have **clinically demonstrated that the use of psilocybin (the active ingredient in entheogenic mushrooms) has significant healing outcomes for individuals suffering from addiction, depression, and terminal illness.** Although lowering the enforcement priority does not change the status of entheogens in the District of Columbia, it does raise awareness about beneficial, clinical applications of these substances. Some of the DC residents currently benefiting from entheogens include: mothers suffering from postpartum depression, veterans suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and patients in end-of-life care.

Public support is growing and Washington, DC should lead

The cities of Denver, Oakland and Santa Cruz have all recently enacted policies lowering the enforcement priority for entheogens. Dozens more cities and states are also considering these reforms, including Chicago and the state of Oregon.

You can read the text of the ballot initiative online at www.DecrimNatureDC.org/Ballot-Initiative

Please mail your petition back to us immediately.

**We need this petition back by May 31st at the latest!
The success of Ballot Initiative 81 is in your hands.**

Instructions

Help Put Initiative 81 on the Ballot

Questions? Visit www.DecrimNatureDC.org/petition or call 202-733-4640

Excerpts of Sample Petition



Please use a **BLACK** or **BLUE** pen only.

STEP 1

Ask all DC voters in your household to sign enclosed petition.

- A** Sign your name as it appears on your DC ID.
- B** Enter your address as it appears on your DC ID:
 - 1) Remember to include Quadrant: NW, SW, SE, SW.
 - 2) Only Street Name, Street Number, Quadrant, and Apt # are needed.
 - 3) Do not write Washington, DC or Zip Code in this box.
- C** Enter your Legal name.
- D** Enter today's date.
- E** Enter the Ward you live in if you know it. We can enter this for you if you are unsure.

STEP 2

You must complete the circulator area at the bottom of the petition even if you are the only signer on this sheet.

WARNING: ONLY DULY REGISTERED QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF DC MAY SIGN THIS PETITION.
EVERY SIGNER MUST SIGN HIS OR HER OWN NAME. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES IS ANY PERSON PERMITTED TO SIGN ANOTHER PERSON'S NAME OR SIGN MORE THAN ONCE. PRINT YOUR NAME AND RESIDENCE ADDRESS IN FULL.

SIGNATURE AND ADDRESS OF PETITIONER		PRINTED NAME OF PETITIONER	DATE SIGNED	WARD
1	SIGNATURE <i>John Voter</i> ADDRESS 2448 Massachusetts Ave. NW	PRINTED NAME OF SIGNER <i>John Voter</i>	5/14/2020	2
2	A SIGNATURE Signature Here B ADDRESS Print DC Address Clearly	C PRINTED NAME OF SIGNER First and Last Legal Name	D DATE Date	E WARD Ward
3	SIGNATURE ADDRESS	PRINTED NAME OF SIGNER Make sure each letter is legible		
4	SIGNATURE ADDRESS	PRINTED NAME OF SIGNER		
5	SIGNATURE ADDRESS	PRINTED NAME OF SIGNER		

FRONT

The Summary Statement of Initiative 81 is on the front page of the petition. To read the full text of the ballot initiative in full go to www.DecrimNatureDC.org/ballot-initiative

Date of the First Signature on Petition.

Date of the Last Signature on Petition.

NOTE: If this petition only has one signature, then both dates will be the same.

NOTICE TO CIRCULATORS

THE SIGNER'S PRINTED NAME, CURRENT ADDRESS, AND THE DATE SIGNED MUST APPEAR IN THE SPACES PROVIDED TO ENSURE THAT THE SIGNATURE WILL BE COUNTED. IF NOT ENTERED BY THE SIGNER, THIS INFORMATION MAY BE ENTERED BY THE CIRCULATOR.

ANY PERSON CONVICTED OF COMMITTING A CORRUPT ELECTION PRACTICE AS SET FORTH IN D.C. OFFICIAL CODE 1-1001.14 SHALL BE FINED UP TO \$10,000 AND/OR IMPRISONED FOR UP TO SIX MONTHS, ONE YEAR, OR FIVE YEARS, WHICHEVER IS APPLICABLE. ANY PERSON CONVICTED OF MAKING A FALSE STATEMENT AS SET FORTH IN D.C. OFFICIAL CODE 22-2405 SHALL BE FINED UP TO \$1,000 AND/OR IMPRISONED FOR UP TO 180 DAYS.

CIRCULATOR'S AFFIDAVIT OF CERTIFICATION

I, **Your First and Last Name**
(Printed Name of Circulator)

Your Full Address, including Zip Code
Circulator's Residence Address (including Zip Code, and Telephone Number (optional))

swear or affirm under penalties of perjury that: (1) I am at least 18 years of age; (2) I am either a resident of the District of Columbia, or a resident of another jurisdiction who registered as a petition circulator with the Board prior to circulating this petition; (3) I was in the presence of each person who signed the petition at the time it was signed; (4) according to the best information available to me, each signature is the genuine signature of the person whose name it purports to be; and (5) the signatures on this petition were obtained between and

Date when signed → **Your Signature Here**
Date Signature of Circulator

IMPORTANT: you must personally witness every signature on this petition!

BACK

Please mail your petition back to us immediately.

**We need this petition back by May 31st at the latest!
Thank you for making history with us.**

