

I am writing as a fourth generation Kansan and part-time Newton resident (living at 2026 Joann Street) to oppose HB 2218 on the grounds that it would create a distortion in healthcare services and aid fraudulent promises being made to investors interested in the potential of psychedelic treatments. My research on this topic was recently featured in USA Today, articulating my view that this area of interest for the public will not be a major economic market in the future. Compass Pathways, the corporation behind these types of bills, is attempting to patent a chemical formulation of the naturally occurring molecule psilocybin and charge thousands for its access. If descheduled by FDA, this bill's redesignation would exempt this proprietary molecule despite there being little to no evidence that its effects or benefits are different from the naturally-occurring molecule. This would have three negative effects on healthcare:

1. Picking winners and losers in an emerging field could distort research: In my view, state governments should not enact policies or loopholes that benefit specific businesses. In so doing, HB 2218 would steer private and perhaps public research dollars toward the "pharmaceutical composition of crystalline polymorph psilocybin" rather than similarly beneficial and interesting forms. Since some studies show that the use of psilocybin, in all forms, can reduce the risk of opiate use disorder, put cluster headaches and other neurological conditions in remission, and help people process various types of trauma, it would be a shame if our time, attention, and resources was unjustifiably dedicated to one molecular form.

2. Compass Pathways is misleading investors: The most common way that people access psilocybin is by growing mushrooms at home using spores that are already legal under Kansas and federal law and procuring grow bags that are easily accessible on the internet. When someone grows a bag of mushrooms, very similar to how they grow culinary oyster mushrooms, they end up with far more than they personally need and often gift or share them with people they know (and in so doing educate their friends or family about how to use them with reverence). Various legalization schemes, including Oregon's, have discovered that trying to charge thousands of dollars for access and supervision services results in extremely low demand. In fact, Oregon's program has run a deficit, costing more to administer than it is bringing in as the businesses close. Most people who try mushrooms do so only once or twice their entire lives, and they do so with a mentor or trusted friend. It is already quite safe to do so for most who chose to do so, per The Lancet. It seems that Compass Pathways is simply trying to capitalize on tech-bro-esque investor enthusiasm for psychedelics rather than presenting a model that has any realistic pathway to profitability given competing alternatives.

3. The best path forward is education: Rather than creating complicated legal and regulatory structures for psilocybin, the best path forward may be clearing the way for education among therapists, social workers, doctors, and the public instead. People are becoming more interested in psychedelics, and this will inevitably continue as the stigma around them erodes over time. There are continuing credit courses for professionals to learn more about ways to educate people about how to use them safely and responsibly. That, in my view, is where most progress toward safe and impactful access will grow. We don't need headline-grabbing laws. We just need people sharing their impactful experiences and also responsibly telling people that psychedelics can have dangers in uncontrolled settings or if used to excess. Once again, thank you for your service in our legislature. And I wish you all a wonderful session debating our laws. Please vote to reject HB 2218 on these grounds.