

From: John Bagby
U.S. Navy veteran
Recent Minnesota resident

To: John Hultquist
Committee Administrator, Hearing of April 15, 2026
Veterans and Military Affairs Committee
Legislature of the State of Minnesota

Re: Written Testimony in support of HF4577

Honorable Representatives,

It's only been a few months since I moved away from Minnesota, where I lived while working at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. During my years in Minnesota, I was involved with the Minnesota Psychedelic Society and watched most of the public streams of meetings of the state Psychedelic Medicine Task Force, chaired by Dr. Nielson. It was an impressive effort. The resulting legislative language is extremely informed and well-considered on many levels.

I hope my voice can contribute to the dialogue on psychedelic medicine. I had a very personal series of healing experiences with psilocybin mushrooms during my life, which I credit with helping me largely heal from compounded issues from five generations of military service and associated trauma. Of course as it goes, my father's attendance at Virginia Military Institute and my uncle's attendance at Annapolis, and their subsequent Vietnam service, are just the Boomer level of the family tree. My Grandfather also brought home his moral injury and trauma from fighting in the Battle of the Bulge and from his role as a U.S. Army supply officer at the liberation of Dachau in 1945. And his father had been a doughboy fighting in World War I. My family has fought in every American war since the revolution. My mother was raised in a hard, hard household. At age 20 she became pregnant with me, in love with my U.S. Air Force airman father, also raised in a hard, hard household. While I was lucky not to have seen combat or suffered any trauma during my four years as a U.S. Navy Seaman, I was not as lucky in those eighteen years growing up before the first day of boot camp.

This is a very Gen-X story, especially later during college on the G.I. Bill in Iowa City, when I went to Grateful Dead shows in Indiana and the very earliest underground raves in Chicago seeking connection. As I experimented in the underground with mushrooms and "e" (MDMA), I was transformed by the feeling of interconnected love, by moments of clear psychological objectivity and insightful connections about myself (and my parents) that my mind was making. My depression, my social anxiety, my hypervigilance all relaxed during these hours and my brain was freed to think deeper abstract thoughts and avoid triggering reactive and defensive and negative stuff. For me this allowed space for so much personal growth, and in fact an ability to form much deeper relationships.

Later in life, married and with children in the 2010s, I invested a lot of time and energy and finances into cognitive behavioral therapy. My therapists were excellent and very helpful to me. If only the CBT I worked through had been designed with psychedelic experiences as part of the protocol. If I could have joined these two healing phases of my life into one, I am more than certain my life would have progressed in a healthier way. But the laws successfully forbid that. True to Gen-X form, I learned by jumping into the deep end. BUT NOT EVERYONE swims after that big jump, and I was very lucky.

I feel very grateful to be around, and to testify to the Veterans and Military Affairs Committee that my personal experience with psilocybin mushrooms have driven a lifetime of advocacy for their ability to serve as healing tools. As someone whose family values have been centered around service, I ask you to allow this psilocybin compound to serve those who most need it. This bill lays the rails down for this train to get down the track safely, finally.

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