



January 28, 2020  
Entheogenic Research,  
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Dear Washington DC Board of Elections:

The Entheogenic Research, Integration, and Education (ERIE) Board believes it is an unalienable right to develop our own relationship with nature, and understands Washington DC is choosing whether or not to decriminalize entheogenic plants and fungi. As an educational organization, we have found extensive evidence which supports there being no scientific or evidentiary basis for these plants and fungi to be illegal.

ERIE is a nonprofit organization providing education and integration services to support the San Francisco Bay Area community since 2011. Over the years, we have noticed the large numbers of diverse communities who are already exploring the potentials of entheogens. People who are seeking community to avoid the feeling of isolation that can emerge from a profound experience that is both stigmatized and criminalized. Decriminalization is a risk reduction strategy to make sure those with potentially transformative experiences can safely access the community and information they need to support their process.

We have found that the majority of individuals are approaching these experiences as sacred, and with the intention of healing. Some say a single entheogenic experience can be worth hundreds of therapy sessions. We have heard countless stories of individuals using entheogens to heal their depression, anxiety, PTSD, substance and alcohol abuse disorders (including opiate addictions), OCD, and trauma. We have also witnessed individuals reporting personal and spiritual growth, creative inspiration and problem solving, and a deeper connection to nature.

In addition, the First Amendment guarantees freedoms including religion and expression. How can we have freedom of religion when entheogenic plants which can catalyze spiritual and mystical experiences are prohibited? How can we have freedom of expression when we are prohibited from freedom of thought through the examination of our consciousness?

We are honored to be able to provide educational support to this growing movement, to undo 50 years of misinformation based upon politics and fear rather than science or community. Please reach out to us for any questions you may have on the topic of entheogenic plants and fungi.

Sincerely,

Larry Norris, PhD Candidate, Executive Director of ERIE  
Kristel Peterson, MSW, Chair of ERIE  
Julie Megler, NP-BC, ERIE Board  
Veronica Hernandez, PhD candidate, ERIE Board