



Veterans of War
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Dear Washington, DC Board of Elections:

Veterans of War, on behalf of veterans nationwide searching for effective approaches towards meaningful healing, respectfully requests your support of the initiative to Decriminalize entheogenic plants and fungi.

According to the VA, there are currently 18.6 Million living US veterans. Of that population, our nation loses 20 per day to suicide; that is 7300 of our brothers and sisters in arms annually. We lose more veterans per year to a preventable outcome than we have in more than 18 years of continuous war! Veterans are a community in desperate need of access to immediate, effective solutions.

Having enlisted in the Marines from June of 2000 until my honorable discharge as a Staff Sergeant in December of 2008, I, like many, deployed multiple times in support of our recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Also like many, I had to learn to cope upon my return with daily ailments such as insomnia, tinnitus, a hyperactive fight-or-flight response, rage, depression and more. Like others, I tried everything from VA sponsored medication, guided therapy, adventure therapy, to even equine therapy to get better but *nothing worked*. While these approaches certainly changed my relationship to the trauma I experienced, they simply seemed to act as a band-aid. When I was alone, I remained suicidal.

It wasn't until I experienced the healing connection offered through plant medicine that I found any measure of true healing. I can sleep again thanks to my work with entheogenic plants. In my desperation to find healing, I had to travel to Peru, a country where ancient medicines are both legal, as well as venerated by the society that they've been a part of for thousands of years. Veterans should not be forced to undertake a dangerous mission into the Amazonian jungle in order to find access to critical, live-saving medicine. I came home and dedicated my life to ensuring that those that are suffering can find tools to recover. The mission at Veterans of War would be much easier to accomplish if entheogenic plants and fungi are decriminalized as it would serve to send a powerful message nationwide: our government is committed to leading the way to solve America's veteran mental health crisis.

Entheogenic plants and fungi offer the ability to reprogram trauma, repair damaged neurotransmitters, and even stimulate the birth of new neurons within the brain. They merit further study as well as application to targeted audiences, such as those suffering from PTSD. As clinical trials have shown again and again, entheogenic plants and fungi are both safe and effective means by which to combat trauma. Veterans of War has seen firsthand the healing potential of these ancient medicines, and advocates strongly for their decriminalization on behalf of a nation of veterans suffering from the after-effects of war that simply want to come home. This is bigger than the failed War on Drugs; lives are at stake. Veterans of War humbly asks for your support in promoting the return to common-sense legislation by decriminalizing our access to natural medicines.

On Behalf of our nations' veterans, Veterans of War thanks you for your time and earnest attention to this matter.

In Continued Service,

Wyly Gray, Executive Director