

Denver will get to vote on whether to decriminalize psychedelic mushrooms in May

Posted: 1:07 PM, Feb 01, 2019 **Updated:** 12:02 AM, Feb 02, 2019



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DENVER – Voters in Denver will get to decide if they want to decriminalize psilocybin mushrooms within city limits in May.

The news comes after the Denver Elections Division on Friday certified a petition from the proponents of the measure, which they said gathered enough signatures for it to be considered in May’s municipal election.

“The Denver Psilocybin Mushroom Decriminalization Initiative submitted a sufficient number of valid signatures and the question will be placed on the May 7, 2019 Municipal Election ballot,” said Joe Szuszwalak of the Denver Elections Division.

Szuszwalak said in a statement Friday that more than 5,500 signatures of the total 8,524 submitted were deemed valid.

The measure would not legalize the hallucinogenic drug for consumption, but rather, would make its possession a low-enforcement priority for police. It would also prohibit the City and County of Denver from spending resources on imposing criminal penalties on those 21 years of age and older in possession of the drug.

Last month, Decriminalize Denver, the group advocating for the decriminalization of mushrooms, [turned in more than 9,000 signatures](#) to the Denver County Board of Elections. Of those, at least 4,726 signatures had to valid to qualify for the ballot

This means voters could make Denver [the first city in the country to decriminalize psilocybin mushrooms](#) .

Kevin Matthews, the campaign manager for Decriminalize Denver, told Denver7 last month that 'shrooms have helped him break his own cycle of depression and sees the drug as a potential treatment for various pain and mental health-related issues. He also argued decriminalization would help lower incarceration rates as it would keep people out of jail for non-violent drug offenses.

The Denver Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Denver Partnership have taken no position on the issue yet.

Decriminalize Denver's strategy mirrors what took place in the Mile High City to decriminalize marijuana before it was legalized statewide in 2012.

Psilocybin mushrooms are federally classified as an illegal drug by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency.