

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA  
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025**

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

S.B. NO. 1042, S.D. 1, RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.

**BEFORE THE:**

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 19, 2025      **TIME:** 10:02 a.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 211

**TESTIFIER(S):**      **WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY.**

(For more information, contact Alana L. Bryant,  
Deputy Attorney General, at (808) 587-3085)

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Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) establish the mental health emerging therapies special fund (fund) to support clinical research and the development of emerging therapies for the treatment of mental health and behavioral health disorders; (2) appropriate general funds into the fund; and (3) appropriate funds out of the fund for the fund's purposes.

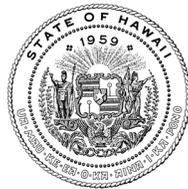
Section 1 of the bill would establish the fund to be administered by the Department of Health, but the fund may not meet the requirements of section 37-52.3, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), which provides that special funds shall: (1) serve a need as demonstrated by the purpose and scope of the program and an explanation of why the program cannot be implemented successfully under the general fund appropriation process; (2) reflect a clear nexus between the benefits sought and charges made upon program users or beneficiaries or a clear link between the program and the sources of revenue; (3) provide an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity; and (4) demonstrate the capacity to be financially self-sustaining.

The bill does not describe the scope of the program, including financial information on fees to be charged, sources of projected revenue, and costs; contain an explanation as to why the special fund could not be successfully implemented under the

general fund appropriation process; reflect a clear nexus between between the benefits sought and charges made upon the program users or beneficiaries or a clear link between the program and the sources of revenue; provide an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity that is used only when essential to the successful operation of the program or activity; or demonstrate how the initiative will be financially self-sustaining.

We suggest adding a purpose section to the bill that explains how the fund meets the requirements of section 37-52.3, HRS.

We respectfully ask the Committee to make the recommended amendments if this bill is to pass. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM  
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND  
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

LUIS P. SALAVERIA  
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE  
*Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā*  
P.O. BOX 150  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE  
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION  
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION  
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

**WRITTEN ONLY**

TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA  
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE  
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
ON  
SENATE BILL NO. 1042, S.D. 1

**February 19, 2025**  
**10:02 a.m.**  
**Room 211 and Videoconference**

RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

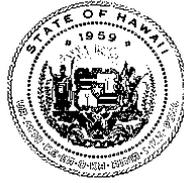
The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill (S.B.) No. 1042, S.D. 1, amends Chapter 321, HRS, to: 1) establish in the State Treasury the Mental Health Emerging Therapies Special Fund (MHETSF) to be administered by the Department of Health (DOH); 2) appropriate an undetermined amount of general funds for FY 26 and FY 27 to be deposited into the MHETSF; and 3) appropriate an undetermined amount of special funds out of the MHETSF for FY 26 and FY 27 to be expended by DOH to support clinical research and the use of emerging therapies for treating mental and behavioral health disorders.

As a matter of general policy, B&F does not support the creation of any special fund, which does not meet the requirements of Section 37-52.3, HRS. Special funds should: 1) serve a need as demonstrated by the purpose, scope of work, and an explanation why the program cannot be implemented successfully under the general fund appropriation process; 2) reflect a clear nexus between the benefits sought and charges made upon the users or beneficiaries or a clear link between the program and

the sources of revenue; 3) provide an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity; and 4) demonstrate the capacity to be financially self-sustaining. Regarding S.B. No. 1042, S.D. 1, it is difficult to determine whether the proposed special fund would be self-sustaining.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
P. O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony COMMENTING on SB1042 SD1  
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR  
SENATOR SHARON Y. MORIWAKI, VICE CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Hearing Date and Time: February 19, 2025, 10:02 a.m. Location: Room 211 and Video

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health will require significant additional funding and  
2 personnel to establish infrastructure should this pass.

3 **Department Position:** The Department offers the following comments on this measure.

4 **Department Testimony:** The Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD) provides the following  
5 testimony on behalf of the Department.

6 While the intent of the measure to establish a special fund to support clinical research  
7 or evaluation is commendable, the Department does not have the infrastructure, personnel or  
8 protocols to support primary scientific research. With a 30% vacancy rate, the Department is  
9 already understaffed in maintaining core functions and cannot afford to divert resources to  
10 develop and manage a new project to support human subject research, which we do not have  
11 the subject matter expertise to perform or oversee. Finding an existing entity with qualified  
12 research investigators and experienced clinical trial personnel and legal support for liability and  
13 compliance for privacy, human participant protections and ethical considerations may be more  
14 likely to achieve the desired outcomes.

1           As the state’s public health agency, the Department is responsible for protecting and  
2 promoting the health of the entire community of Hawaii. The Department also notes there is a  
3 broad array of emerging therapies and recommends its definition not be restricted to  
4 psychedelics and entactogenic compounds. While we support clinical research to explore  
5 emerging treatments for specific refractory conditions, this is beyond the scope and expertise  
6 of the Department. However, we are happy to be part of the discussion to identify alternative  
7 approaches.

8           Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



## **Testimony in Support of SB1042**

Senate Ways & Means Committee | February 19, 2025

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ashley Lukens. For the past 19 years, I have worked as a community organizer and advocate in Hawaii. I received my PhD in Political Science from UH Manoa in 2013. Today, I am writing in strong support of SB 1042, a bill which is the continuation of a now 5 year legislative conversation around therapeutic access to breakthrough therapies in Hawaii.

SB 1042, the Mental Health Emerging Therapies Act creates a dedicated fund to support clinical research, training, and access to innovative treatments for mental health conditions, including funding for FDA-regulated trials and compassionate use programs. It also expands education for professionals, improves patient access through pilot programs and community support services, and mandates annual reporting on program outcomes and recommendations. While its creates a long term receptacle for state funding, I am confident that private sector partners would also contribute to the fund if it is created.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of psychedelic medicine on the brain and body. Breakthrough therapies like psilocybin and MDMA are proving to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. So it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to bring these breakthrough therapies above ground for broader use. Since 2019, Clarity Project has been working closely with the legislators, state officials, Office of Wellness and Resilience and various community doctors and practitioners to understand the current national landscape of psychedelic access programs.

Even with the impending rescheduling of both psilocybin and MDMA, expected in 3-5 years, the Hawaii State Legislature has an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA, and other medicines. Groundbreaking initiatives in favor of these therapies are occurring at all levels of government, private and public research institutions, and throughout mainstream society. Leading examples, include Oregon that

launched its Oregon Psilocybin Services with the State's Oregon Health Authority, which licenses & regulates psilocybin for therapeutic use. Colorado voters approved the decriminalization and legal therapeutic use of psilocybin and other psychedelics. Many expect California, Vermont, Washington and New York to follow suit. [Decriminalization of psilocybin](#) and other psychedelics has already been approved in at least 15 counties across 5 states, including California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Washington, and Washington D.C.

SB 1042 builds on these initiatives to provide a funding vehicle to help accelerate patient access. The Mental Health Emerging Therapies Act creates a dedicated fund to support research, training, and access to innovative mental health treatments, including FDA-regulated clinical trials and compassionate use programs. It enhances education by training mental health professionals and expanding public awareness while also developing pilot programs and community services to improve patient access. By investing in research, workforce training, and policy development, Hawaii can lead in advancing evidence-based mental health solutions and reducing barriers to transformative care.

We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin. Please support this measure by advancing it through this committee today.

Thank you,

Ashley Lukens, PhD  
Founder, Director - Clarity Project



# Aloha Integrative Mental Health

PO Box 162, Mountain View, HI 96771

[www.alohaimh.com](http://www.alohaimh.com)

email:[admin@alohaimh.com](mailto:admin@alohaimh.com)

## Written Testimony in Support of Hawaii SB1042

**Date:** 02/11/2025

**To:** Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

**From:** LeAnn Neilson  
Owner PMHNP-BC  
Aloha Integrative Mental Health  
18-1228 Kona Street  
Mountain View, HI 96771

## Re: Support for SB1042

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 1042 (SB1042). I would be honored to present my testimony in person, however I can not take the time away from my patients to do so. As a mental healthcare provider, business owner, and resident of Hawaii, I believe this bill addresses important issues that are crucial to the well-being of our state, especially in light of the significant trauma related to trauma, such as the Lahaina fires, limited mental health care providers and threadbare mental health support available within the state.

Psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the **most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings**. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation. **I highly**

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Fax: 808-452-1306

**value the potential for thorough and effective mental health care when using psychedelic medicine for the following ways:**

**Clinical trials have demonstrated that psilocybin therapy can reduce PTSD symptoms and anxiety associated with trauma. For example, a study by the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) found that MDMA, combined with therapy, could be effective for PTSD. Psilocybin, used similarly, could provide similar benefits, with the added advantage of potentially fewer sessions due to the lasting effects of a SINGLE DOSE.**

**Veteran and First Responder Treatment: Veterans and first responders, who often experience high levels of PTSD, have benefited from psilocybin therapy. By addressing the root causes of trauma, such as combat exposure or traumatic events, psilocybin allows for deep emotional healing and reduction in PTSD symptoms.**

**Research from Johns Hopkins University has shown that psilocybin, when combined with psychotherapy, can lead to significant reductions in depressive symptoms. In one study, 67% of participants experienced a reduction in symptoms lasting for months after a SINGLE psilocybin session.**

**Patients who have undergone psilocybin-assisted therapy for depression often report lasting improvements in mood, outlook, and overall life satisfaction. This is especially promising for individuals with treatment-resistant depression, who have typically struggled to find lasting relief with conventional antidepressants.**

**Psilocybin's ability to induce profound experiences can help individuals gain new insights into their addictive behaviors. Many individuals report experiencing a sense of clarity and insight into the root causes of their addiction, such as past trauma, emotional pain, or unresolved issues. This can enable them to develop healthier coping mechanisms.**

**The psychedelic experience can increase self-awareness, allowing individuals to understand the triggers and patterns that fuel their addiction. With the help of therapists, patients can integrate this understanding into their daily lives, reducing the need to rely on addictive substances or behaviors for emotional regulation.**

**Psilocybin can foster a sense of empathy and connection with others, which is often lacking in individuals struggling with addiction. By encouraging a sense of oneness, it can reduce feelings of isolation that often drive substance use, leading to a more positive, healing mindset.**

**SB1042 is particularly vital because it will address the urgent need for mental health services for individuals impacted by the Lahaina fire, Hawaii residents struggling with treatment resistant mental health conditions as well as struggling with addiction. By ensuring the availability of alternative resources, it offers crucial support to those facing emotional and psychological challenges. This bill is**

a critical step toward improving mental health care that is thorough, time efficient, and sustainable, thereby improving access and utilizing the available mental health support in a more effective manner.

As a psychiatric nurse practitioner, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges that our communities face in the aftermath of disaster and during times of hardship. Traditional models of mental health care can compound distress in Hawaii due to lack of available providers, medication treatments that can cause detrimental side effects, and difficulty accessing quality care. Alternative therapy offers a more advanced model for total mental health improvement that can be achieved in a shorter amount of time and is long lasting, improving availability and access to resources. For example, many individuals and families have struggled to access mental health support due to the overburdened mental healthcare system in Hawaii, which has resulted in a prolonged period of emotional and physical distress. SB1042 provides a comprehensive approach to address these challenges and is a necessary step forward for our state's recovery and resilience.

Given the ongoing challenges that many in our community continue to face, SB1042 is an essential piece of legislation that will provide immediate relief and long-term benefits. The urgency of addressing these issues cannot be overstated. With the support of this bill, we can ensure that those who have been most affected by the Lahaina fire, economic hardship, and mental healthcare disparities will receive the help they need to rebuild their lives and move forward with confidence.

In conclusion, I strongly urge you to support SB1042. By doing so, we will provide crucial resources and support to those in need, strengthen the recovery efforts in our state, and promote long-term resilience for all Hawaiians. I appreciate your attention to this matter and your commitment to improving the lives of our residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



The image shows a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'Jennifer L. PMHNP BC'. The letters are cursive and somewhat overlapping.

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2025 6:17:04 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruta Jordans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Ways & Means | 2025 Legislative Session

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee,

My name is Ruta Jordans, I live in Kauai and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to therapies that actually work. I have seen friends and relatives who have returned from war zones with PTSD treated with opioids by the Veterans Administration, causing them to become addicted, BUT NOT HELPED AT ALL FOR THE PTSD. Those friends and relatives who were lucky enough to find sources of psychedelic medicines found that they helped. It was very apparent that anyone using psychedelics needs to know how to work with it to use it appropriately. That is why we need this bill to pass. Please vote in support of SB1042. Mahalo!

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2025 7:05:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Whaley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to medicines like psilocybin and MDMA.**

**My biggest break throughs in my healing journey from C-PTSD, has been with the use of these medicines in a safe and controlled environment with qualified supervision.**

**Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.**

**States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.**

**With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i. We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities.**

**Mahalo,**

**Stephanie Whaley**

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2025 7:09:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kate Paine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

WAM - The evidence of health & welfare benefit is overwhelming, as is support.

Influencers should no longer hold sway over good legislation. Please pass SB 1042

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2025 8:29:28 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amy Brinker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for moving this bill forward. I strongly support this work and look forward to Hawai'i joining the ranks of states that are taking the necessary steps to address the real and persistent needs of those suffering from PTSD, addiction, and other mental health issues. Significant taxpayer dollars go to standard mental health care and addiction treatment services that seem endless and ineffective in some cases, yet alternative therapies have shown to work in very few treatments. Not passing this bill would not only lack compassion for those hurting the most (including vets that have given their all to ensure our safety), it would be a failure to steward taxpayer resources. With inflation and funding cuts at the federal level, we need to exhaust every opportunity to implement safe, well-designed, cost-effective programs like this to address community needs.

Mahalo,

Amy Brinker

Ala Moana/Kaka'ako

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2025 8:49:56 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julie Iezzi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Ways & Means | 2025 Legislative Session

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee

My name is Julie Iezzi, I live in Honolulu and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to participate in psilocybin and MDMA clinical trials and eventually effective treatments for severe depression resistant to treatment by currently available drugs. I write from a place of deep personal concern, having struggled for years trying every available treatment for a family member, with no efficacious results to date. Having them be able to participate in clinical trials here in Hawai‘i, and be part of finding solutions, bringing peace and hope to many who suffer debilitating depression would truly be life changing.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, major depressive disorder, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way

for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai‘i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai‘i. We do not want the citizens of Hawai‘i to miss out on these healing modalities.

Mahalo,

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2025 10:15:25 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Harvey Arkin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)**

Senate Committee on Ways & Means | 2025 Legislative Session

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee,

My name is Harvey Arkin I live in Manoa and I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

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**If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.**

With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i. We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities.

Mahalo,

Harvey Arkin

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2025 9:30:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ella Aki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill!

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2025 11:59:58 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Sakamoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)**

Senate Committee on Ways & Means | 2025 Legislative Session

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee,

I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies.

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**If passed, Hawai‘i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.**

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Mahalo

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2025 1:12:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
christina braddock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christina N. Braddock. I am a resident, a business and property owner, a Nurse Practitioner here in Hawai‘i, a veteran with eight years of active duty in the U.S. Army, and a full-time caregiver to my spouse, who sustained a severe traumatic brain injury (TBI). As a former combat trauma nurse, I was prepared for the realities of war overseas—but I was not prepared for the war I faced at home, a war *even more* devastating and insidious.

One year after returning from Afghanistan, while serving as the lead trauma nurse at Tripler Army Medical Center, my husband was struck by a tow truck carrying a semi-refrigerator truck while stopped at a red light on the Likelike Highway. He was left with **catastrophic injuries** that changed our lives *forever*. What has followed has been an ongoing grueling five-year+ journey as his primary caregiver, navigating a fragmented healthcare system that continuously failed us. We traveled across the mainland seeking proper care, only to find that even at the nation's top hospitals, no provider truly understood the complexity of his condition or offered real hope. He is unable to walk, no clear speech, cannot use his left arm, has anger and depression issues, and the list goes on. What it has done to my family is something I will never be able to fully accept, brain injury and post traumatic stress destroys families, it takes countless lives, and it is the elephant in the room no one is talking about. Trauma is real and it is time we begin to better understand it.

Trauma gets stored in the body through a complex interplay of the nervous system, brain, and physiological responses. When a person experiences a traumatic event, the body shifts into a fight, flight, or freeze response, flooding the system with stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline. If the trauma is not properly processed, the body remains in a state of hypervigilance, and the unprocessed emotions become "trapped" in the nervous system, muscles, and fascia. This can manifest as chronic pain, tension, digestive issues, or autoimmune disorders. The brain's limbic system, particularly the amygdala and hippocampus, plays a key role in encoding traumatic memories, sometimes bypassing rational processing in the prefrontal cortex, making the trauma feel ever-present. Somatic therapies, breathwork, and trauma-informed care help release these stored experiences, allowing the body to regulate and heal.

It was this desperate need for better solutions that led me to become an Integrative Family Nurse Practitioner—to not only help my husband but to support others left feeling hopeless and abandoned. Beyond his physical impairments—his inability to walk, the loss of use of his left

arm, his speech difficulties, and his memory loss—the most devastating consequences of TBI are the emotional and psychological wounds: anger, violence, addiction, emotional instability, confusion, irritability, and above all, Post-Traumatic Stress. These conditions do not just affect individuals; they ravage families, break relationships, and push people to their limits.

The number one cause of death for individuals with TBI is not the long list of secondary and tertiary complications. It is **suicide**. The emotional and cognitive toll is so overwhelming that, for many, it feels like the only escape.

This is why we must act. This is why breakthrough therapies—psychedelic-assisted therapy, medical cannabis, ketamine, and other emerging treatments—are not just alternatives but necessities. Our conventional treatments are not enough. I have seen firsthand how these innovative therapies can restore lives. After years of searching for answers, my husband and I had to leave the country to access treatments like ibogaine, psilocybin, and *ketamine-assisted therapy*. These medicines saved **both** our lives. They allowed us to reclaim a sense of self, of purpose, of healing.

I have since pursued rigorous training in psychedelic-assisted therapy, completing a year-long intensive research and education program through the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies. The medical community is recognizing what many indigenous cultures have known for centuries—these treatments work. Major institutions, including Johns Hopkins, NYU, and the VA, are leading research that shows psychedelic therapy can dramatically reduce PTSD, depression, and suicidality in veterans and trauma survivors. These therapies must be accessible here in Hawai'i.

The statistics on veteran suicide are staggering. The Department of Veterans Affairs reports that 17 to 22 veterans die by suicide every day, but independent analyses suggest that number is closer to 50 per day when accounting for overdoses and high-risk behaviors. These are not just numbers. They are my friends, my battle buddies, my neighbors, my patients. I have lost too many to suicide, overdoses, and preventable tragedies due to a lack of effective mental health care. **One is too many. Fifty a day is a national crisis. Please note, this number does not even include our civilian population. 1 in 4 healthy adults have a mental health condition, 1 in 4 children included, 1 in 2 military children.**

But it's not just veterans. This crisis extends to our kupuna, our keiki, and our communities devastated by trauma, including the survivors of the Maui wildfires. As a first responder to the Lahaina disaster, I witnessed war-like trauma—people losing everything in an instant. The emotional wounds are just as severe as the physical ones, and our current mental health infrastructure is not enough. We need better options. We need MORE options. The Lahaina Engine 3 has already lost individuals to suicide, even BEFORE the fires, now they are struggling tremendously seeking alternative therapies that may or may not be approved, in a desperate attempt to save themselves. We NEED to do better. We need to get access for healing this generational trauma that is inevitable to this population for what they all witnessed, it will forever be stored in their body, because the body does KEEP the score, and this eventually leads to dysfunction, disease, and crisis.

Hawai‘i must take action. We **must** invest in research, in training, and in access to these life-saving treatments. We cannot afford to continue forcing our residents—our veterans, our first responders, our families—to leave their homeland in search of healing. We have an opportunity to lead, to bring cutting-edge, evidence-based therapies to our islands, to offer **hope where none exists**.

I urge you to support legislative efforts to expand access to psychedelic-assisted therapy and other breakthrough mental health treatments in Hawai‘i. **We owe it to our veterans**. We owe it to our communities. We owe it to the thousands suffering in silence. **It is time to stop the preventable deaths. It is time to bring real healing home.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

With deep hope,

Christina N. Braddock, APRN, MSN, CEN, CPTR, FNP-BC  
Family Nurse Practitioner, Combat Veteran, Caregiver, MAPS Psychedelic  
Provider, and Advocate  
808-212-992

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2025 1:20:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James Braddock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I suffered a severe TBI in 2019. Just had my first ketamine treatment and it seriously helped me. My muscles are very tight and spastic, this medicine has helped them relax for the most they've relaxed in years

## Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Ways & Means | 2025 Legislative Session

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee,

My name is **Pamela Menter**, I live in **Waimanalo** and I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to

**psilocybin, MDMA, ketamine, and/or other breakthrough therapies. As a mental health professional, I have witnessed a great deal of treatment-resistant situations, in which patients have not been helped by traditional treatment approaches and medications that have been available over the past 100 years. More effective help is within reach, with the newer breakthrough therapies, proven to literally change lives for the better by numerous academic research studies and trials.**

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. **If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.**

With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i. We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities.

Mahalo,  
Pamela Menter

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2025 4:13:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Crystal Salas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I work in research and grew up in Hawaii. These treatments deserve to be explored for those they are found to be appropriate for and those suffering for which nothing currently available has proven beneficial.

## Testimony in Support of SB1042

Senate Committee on Ways & Means - 2025 Legislative Session

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Members of the WAM Committee

My name is Phyllis Moses, and I currently live near Portland, Oregon. I am writing in **strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies.

I lived in Maui for 21 years and earned my BA in Psychology from UH Manoa. I moved to the mainland to be of more service to help relieve mental health issues in ways I was not able to in HI. I've been in the health/healing field for 30 years, and these therapies have shown remarkable results. I am currently a Licensed Psilocybin Facilitator in the state of Oregon since it has been made legal in 2023. I've worked with Veterans, addictions, anxiety, treatment resistant depression, PTSD, and Complex PTSD. All of these people in their own way are looking to find joy and purpose in life, which these breakthrough therapies have enabled them to do. One physician I worked with who had a very beneficial experience, remarked at the end of their Psilocybin journey, "Why have they kept this from the medical profession?"

My own life has been transformed from C-PTSD to now being able to serve many people to help alleviate their mental health issues and lead more productive and gratifying lives. I've worked with people who have flown in from Hawaii, as well as the East Coast of US, and various states in-between. I've even had people come from Japan and So. Korea. These were people who could afford it, and their lives have changed beneficially by utilizing psilocybin. These breakthrough therapies should be available to all people wherever they live, and to be financially accessible as well.

Over the past two decades (although research was started in the 1950's before being shut down in the '70's), researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies such as psilocybin and MDMA.

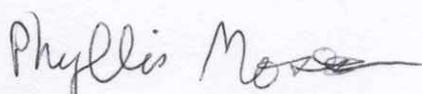
States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020), and Natural Medicine Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health issues to find the help they need.

If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 - 2023.

**I would move back to Hawai'i in a heartbeat to help with training, and instituting safe, ethical, culturally appropriate, and legal access so that anyone who wants to can find relief from their mental health ailments.**

Please support this measure, which provides a safe legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i. With solid, evidence based scientific understanding, the citizens of Hawai'i don't have to miss out on these breakthrough healing modalities.

Mahalo,

  
Phyllis Moses

2-15-2025

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2025 10:37:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachelle Chin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee,

My name is Rachelle, I live in Oahu and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to expanding access to psilocybin, MDMA, ketamine as breakthrough therapies. As a clinical social worker myself there is knowledge of scientific research in support of the benefits these forms of therapy can bring to people, including improving anxiety, depression, and promoting motivation and overall quality of life.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai‘i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough

therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i. We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities.

Mahalo,

Rachelle Chin

My name is Brandon Bryan, I live in Tyler, Texas and I am writing in strong support of SB1042 to establish funds to support breakthrough mental health therapies. Psychedelic medicine has saved my life and I believe it has the capability to help so many others.

As a veteran, I've spent numerous years fighting the demons in my head alone. I drank myself to sleep most nights after my deployment to Iraq in 2008. Physically, I came home, but mentally and spiritually, something had shifted in me, and it wasn't for the best. I was full of rage, anger, hate, resentment, and trauma built up since childhood, but it made me good at my job and it was praised. Even though I was in this Brotherhood, there weren't many that I could confide in due to the stigma of being considered weak. I was completely overwhelmed with guilt, shame, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation.

After drinking the symptoms away for a decade, the wheels finally came off on March 6, 2018. Leading up to this incident I had three deaths in my family, my ex-wife was threatening to leave me, and I had sustained a traumatic brain injury the month before. My life was in complete chaos and turmoil. I found myself in a Xanax- and alcohol-induced flashback, barricading myself in my home. I had a pistol on me and I was going to take my own life in fear the enemy would capture me. Luckily in my stupor I called my best friend who also got hold of some guys from the team and our team psychologist. One of my teammates was able to talk to the police officers on scene and deescalate the situation.

From there, I underwent various inpatient treatments for alcohol and drug rehabilitation, Post Traumatic Stress (PTSD), and traumatic brain injury (TBI). I followed each of those treatment programs to the best of my ability, but I couldn't find complete relief. I was committed to staying alcohol free, I swallowed every pill the doctors threw at me, and was in talk therapy weekly—but I was still ready to end my life.

After four years remaining sober from alcohol and trying all that Western medicine had to offer, on October 1, 2021, one of my Special Warfare Combat Crewman brothers took his own life. I had previously found Veterans Exploring Treatment Solutions (VETS) through online searches but was hesitant to apply because I felt that there were guys worse off than me or had more deployments than me; in my mind, I wasn't "that bad." But after my teammate took his own life, I knew I wasn't too far behind him. I applied for a grant and went to Mexico in January 2022. My experience with psychedelic therapy was the single most spiritual experience of my life. It has given me a new lease on life, true love for myself and others, and most importantly, a relationship with the Almighty God. Psychedelic-assisted therapy is not a magic pill, but it was an opportunity to shift my perceptions and work on becoming the best version of myself FOR myself. With the support of trained therapists, I was finally able to reframe my traumatic experiences and find a sense of peace that had long eluded me. The therapy taught me that vulnerability is not a weakness but a strength—a crucial part of healing that allowed me to reconnect with the camaraderie I had missed since leaving the military.

As someone who has walked the line between hope and despair, I am proof that there is another way. Psychedelic-assisted therapy offered me a second chance at life, and I believe it

can do the same for many others. I humbly ask that you support this measure to allow the citizens of Hawaii the opportunity to one day experience the healing that I had to leave this country to receive.

Mahalo,  
Brandon Bryan

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 4:39:54 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tracey Bryan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Tracey Bryan, I live in Tyler, Texas and I am writing in strong support of SB1042 to establish funds to support breakthrough mental health therapies. I believe that psychedelic therapy is such a breakthrough therapy. It has the potential to not just save lives, but transform people from a shell of a human to a thriving member of our society. I have seen this happen in our own home.

My husband is a 20 year veteran of the United States Navy, 14 of those years spent with Naval Special Warfare as a Special Boat Operator. I have watched him struggle and suffer from the devastating effects of post traumatic stress and multiple traumatic brain injuries sustained during the course of his military career. It is not something I can explain succinctly in a short letter, but the darkness and war that raged inside him was terrifying and all consuming. It permeated every aspect of his life and impacted everyone around him. He was on two SSRIs, two pills for sleeping, alprazolam for anxiety, and then at least 2 different pharmaceuticals for the side effects introduced by the aforementioned prescription medications. This cocktail kept him from extreme depression probably about 50% of the time. However it also kept him from experiencing any joy, happiness or any feelings really, aside from anger. He had given up alcohol and was seeing a therapist regularly. After another teammate took his own life, he decided it was time for a change. We were desperate for some hope. Separately we both went online to research options and both came across the website for Veterans Exploring Treatment Solutions (VETS). He filled out an application and was accepted to their program to be able to leave the country to go to a retreat where he would receive the psychedelics ibogaine and 5MeO-DMT.

I have worked as a researcher in a pediatric orthopedic department at a major academic affiliated hospital in Southern California for over 2 decades. While my work has not had me involved in many pharmaceutical trials, I understand the process and the importance of the 4 phases of clinical trials in establishing the safety and efficacy of a medication. It had me very apprehensive that my husband was going to leave the country to ingest medicines that had not yet gone through this rigorous testing. I quickly jumped onto pubmed and was relieved to see that at least some research existed, particularly around ibogaine. I was relieved by the knowledge of the director of the retreat center in answering all of my concerns. But the reality is my husband was on track to end up as a statistic if this retreat did not work, so I put aside my apprehension in hopes that what we were hearing had worked for so many other veterans would work for him.

My husband went to Mexico in January of 2022 for his psychedelic retreat. Immediately, his night sweats and night terrors ceased. He has been able to stay off all psychotropic and sleep medications. While he can still experience depression and anxiety, it does not go as deep or extreme as it used to and the duration of the episodes are shorter. The cerebral reset that the ibogaine allowed, gave him the clean slate to invest significant time into re-learning how to process and express his emotions in a much healthier way. Relationships that seemed to be irreparably broken were restored, as people could sense within 10 minutes of being with him that he was no longer the same person. He no longer isolates himself, but desires to serve others. He spends much of his time supporting his brothers and sisters who are struggling OR encouraging and celebrating with them on their wins.

After my husband began to get better and I no longer needed to spend my time orchestrating our lives to avoid the various triggers that could set him into a violent spiral, I started to have my own anxieties and traumas surface. Thankfully, VETS offers support for the wives to experience their own retreats. So I also applied for a grant and in 2024 was able to go to Mexico to a facility where I was able to experience the healing impact of psilocybin and 5MeO-DMT. I am no longer captive to the fears and anxieties that were paralyzing and consuming me. Being able to walk freely in my true inheritance has allowed me to become a better human, rest in truth, and walk in hope for the future.

We owe it to the citizens of our country, especially our veterans, to have access to these therapies and the healing that my husband and I (and so many others) have experienced. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway to pave the way for therapeutic access to breakthrough therapies, such as psychedelic medicines, in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Tracey Bryan

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 7:19:32 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Randy Gonce	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 9:12:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jina Uyeda	Testifying for Centered Hawaii. LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in **strong support of SB1042 SD1**, which advances critical measures for addressing substance use disorder (SUD) treatment and recovery in our community. I am a Psychologist and a **licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Certified Substance Abuse Counselor**. I have witnessed firsthand the urgent need for increased access to effective, evidence-based interventions. I also did my dissertation on how psychedelics have changed brain functions of people suffering with substance use disorder, Post traumatic Stress disorder, and treatment resistant depression.

This bill represents a vital step in ensuring that individuals struggling with SUD receive the care they need, integrating holistic and culturally responsive approaches that align with Hawaii's unique values and traditions. By supporting SB1042 SD1, we are investing in recovery, reducing recidivism, and ultimately strengthening the well-being of our 'ohana.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. I respectfully urge you to approve this bill.

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 9:56:12 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michal C Cohen	Testifying for Michal Cohen, LCSW	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Michal Cohen, LCSW, I live in Kaka’ako on Oahu and I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to this potent healing modality.

I am a licensed clinical social worker who works in private practice. Prior to establishing my own practice, I worked with both combat veterans and victims of military sexual trauma at the Department of Veterans Affairs, I have extensive knowledge and experience about the challenges people face when they have PTSD. Most of the current treatments for PTSD do not work.

I have lived through the horrific experience of losing a client to suicide. This client was waiting for psilocybin treatment to become legal. His trauma was quite extensive and none of the treatment options we tried worked. He took his own life because the treatment he read about with so much promise, was not legally available to him. People are literally losing their lives because of limited treatment options. Not every one can afford to travel to Mexico for these treatments. We owe it to those suffering from PTSD and depression to offer a treatment that actually works and has been used for centuries for deep healing transformations.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive

results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. **If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.**

We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Michal Cohen, LCSW

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 11:05:45 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristina Rodriguez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)**

**Senate Committee on Ways & Means | 2025 Legislative Session**

**Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee**

My name is Kristina Rodriguez, I live in Maui County and I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to life saving medicines.

As a registered nurse specializing in psychedelic-assisted therapy, I have witnessed firsthand the profound healing potential of plant medicines and psychedelics. Backed by research and millenia of indigenous use, these substances offer a powerful, evidence-based approach to addressing mental health conditions often where conventional treatments fall short. Personally, my own experiences with psychedelics have deepened my empathy, expanded my resilience, and allowed me to process past trauma in ways traditional therapy never could. With proper education, regulation, and medical oversight, psychedelic medicines can revolutionize mental healthcare, providing hope and healing to countless individuals in need.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. **If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.**

We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Kristina M. Rodriguez, BSN-RN, IFMCP

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 11:10:04 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sam Tramonte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Sam Tramonte and I live on Maui. There are no words in our language to express the positive impact and lasting positive results from breakthrough therapies, especially with the medicines of MDMA, psilocybin, and ketamine. Our descendants will one day wonder why it took us so long to legalize these gifts when we could have done so sooner and helped our fellow humans to heal, move away from addictions, be more complete individuals, and access the vibrancy from within that these medicines afford us.

Navigating life in our current society is not always easy. These medicines help one to navigate with better insights, more heart, a more direct connection to a higher power, and teach us how to be more loving, gentle, humble, and well rounded individuals who act from a place of integrity and heart.

Withholding the research and access to our community is withholding progress to all of what we love. I hope and pray there is an opening so that all of our relations get to benefit from what these medicines and these expert practitioners have to offer. It is past time. There has been enough suffering.

My vote is for us to grow into the next evolution of homo sapiens so we can get closer to our self defined designation of being wise(sapiens). A wise choice is to make healing more readily available to all. The proof is there. It has always been there, with some of these medicines for millennia. Our descendants are counting on us.

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 1:35:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edith Garcia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senate Committee on Ways & Means | 2025 Legislative Session

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee,

My name is Edith Garcia. I live in Hilo, HI and I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies.

I am a proud veteran who has served this country for over ten years. Like many of my fellow service members, I have struggled with PTSD, anxiety, depression, and other chronic conditions as a result of my service. Unfortunately, my experiences within the VA healthcare system have compounded my suffering, leading to medical trauma that has only worsened my condition. Despite my service and sacrifice, I found myself unable to access the care I truly needed within the traditional medical system. In desperation, I sought treatment overseas, where I finally found relief. I am alive today because of those treatments. However, no veteran should have to leave their country or their home state just to receive adequate care. We deserve access to all evidence-based treatment options, especially those showing promise for mental health conditions that disproportionately affect veterans. SB1042 is a crucial step forward in addressing this urgent need. By supporting clinical research on emerging therapies—specifically psychedelics for mental and behavioral health disorders—this bill opens the door for innovative treatments that could save lives, reduce suffering, and offer new hope to those struggling with treatment-resistant conditions. The scientific community has already demonstrated the therapeutic potential of psychedelics for PTSD, depression, and anxiety. It is time for Hawaii to lead in this field and ensure that our state's veterans, first responders, and all residents have access to safe, regulated, and effective treatments. As a veteran, I have fought for the freedoms of this nation. Now, I ask you to fight for the freedom to heal—for me, for my fellow veterans, and for countless others in need. Please pass SB1042 and support psychedelic research in Hawaii.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a

wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. **If passed, Hawai‘i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.**

With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai‘i. We do not want the citizens of Hawai‘i to miss out on these healing modalities.

Mahalo,

Edith Garcia

Navy Veteran

February 17, 2025

Relating to **Mental Health Emerging Therapies Access and Funding**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Keith-Agaran,

Mahalo for seriously considering this important step forward to honor veterans and save local lives.

Hawaii has the highest concentration of active duty military per capita of any state<sup>1</sup> - even more than Washington DC or Virginia on a per capita basis. Roughly one of every ten Hawaii residents is a veteran.<sup>2</sup>

Over 20 veterans are committing suicide in our country every day. The number of active-duty personnel and veterans who have died by suicide is more than four times the number killed in combat over the past twenty years.<sup>3</sup>

Current treatment modalities stabilize patients so they can minimally function when they are released from the hospital. But relapses are common which destabilize families, rob patients of hope and set up conditions for suicide. Current treatments are 'band-aids' not cures.

New treatment modalities show remarkable, long-lasting benefits, all at a fraction of the cost of current treatment.<sup>4</sup>

Veterans and residents deserve an opportunity to participate in this promising research. Many other states are taking similar steps.

Private donors will use this opportunity to help fund research and safe treatment protocols that save local lives. According to MAPS, an organization that has run multiple clinical trials providing veterans immediate access to breakthrough therapies under the guidance of the FDA and their supervising clinicians, the average cost of a clinical trial is \$300,000.

I will personally commit \$250,000 over 5 years to this effort if this bill passes.

With Aloha,

-Michael Mohr, Oahu resident

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<sup>1</sup> [www.security.org](http://www.security.org) – Which States Carry the Highest Military Burden?

<sup>2</sup> same as above

<sup>3</sup> <https://missionrollcall.org/veteran-voices/articles/the-state-of-veteran-suicide/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://vetsolutions.org/research/>

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 4:07:26 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Silva	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Ways & Means | 2025 Legislative Session

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee,

My name is Jessica Silva, I live in Colorado and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to breakthrough therapies.

I am writing to convey my experiences with both traditional clinical therapies and non-traditional mental health treatments throughout my husband’s military career, and how they have affected our family.

My husband served as a Navy SEAL for 27 years. He completed 17 deployments, 14 of which were post-9/11 combat deployments assigned to SEAL Team 6. He sustained multiple traumatic brain injuries, physical injuries, but more subtle...the inevitable moral injuries that accompany being an eye-witness to the atrocities of war. The military was, as usual, more reactive than proactive in the provision of mental health services to their members (non-existent to the families until much later), and very little attention was paid to what sustained exposure to brutal conflict and an increased op-tempo will do to the human psyche. In addition to his personal fight, our entire family was subject to the pain of him being gone for half our kids’ lives, as well as the added stress of so many casualties. Our kids were frequently seeing their mom dressed in black every time he deployed, having friends whose dads were never coming home, the news of men they knew dying. During one particular 10-year period, we experienced at least one casualty every time deployed. In 2011, we had front row seats for Extortion 17, losing dozens in one fell swoop. One morning at 3am, I received a call from a friend in Germany. “What troop is Jason?”, she asked. I didn’t know. She said an entire Chinook had gone down. Well, death notifications weren’t made until after 6am. So I spent the next several hours sitting on the stairs by the door in the dark, waiting for the knock. I didn’t learn until hours later that he was alive. When I heard his voice, I broke. Over time, it took its toll on all of us.

It was a gradual decline, a loss of resilience. It took longer and longer for him to mentally return home, until he just didn't return anymore. I saw him lose himself slowly, and I was unaware at the time that I was losing myself too. I was helpless in the face of so much loss, an endless stream of it. His self-medication with alcohol was his way to numb, and he paired it with isolation, becoming a shadow even when he was physically present. The member of our family that had been the playful dork, the silly dad, was a reactive, unsmiling specter around whom we all walked on eggshells. I forced couples therapy. For two self admitted over-achievers, we failed spectacularly. He experienced bouts of depression, anxiety, sleeplessness, nightmares, all the hallmarks of PTSD, made worse by another traumatic brain injury in 2008 when a suicide bomber set off his vest which brought down the building and sent fragments into his face, killing 2 other teammates (and the dog). One night when my son was around 8 years old, I had a hard time getting him to bed. He was being a typical silly kid, but I was tired and came downstairs and complained to my husband. He charged upstairs and pulled my son out of bed by his ankle, where he dangled in the air upside down. My son was so scared he peed his pants.

I was a single parent, even when he was home. He was so stuck in fight or flight mode that even a simple interaction would have him physically trying to escape the situation. He would literally exit the room mid-conflict.

My husband was shocked by his own behavior, but was reluctant to utilize the psychologists at the command due to the stigma that was associated with mental health, thinking he was weak, that he would lose his active status, his security clearance, and his credibility. A SEAL's worst punishment is being taken off the job. The strain showed up in our kids' behavior as well. My son was born in 2000 so all he knew was wartime. When he entered high school he started cutting himself, his grades declined, and he was getting into trouble. I was barely sleeping, waiting for the phone to ring, for CACO uniforms to show up at my door. When he was home, I worried that I would wake up to a suicide note. This was now YEARS that we were living in survival mode and we were exhausted.

When he retired in 2019, we thought we had won...we "made it", right? However, the fight for equilibrium lasted far beyond his career. There were many times when divorce was appearing to be the only way for me to survive the storm. Worse was his apathy, he would tell me to just leave. The only reason we are still married today is that neither of us quit on the same day.

The time for ghosts to appear had come. The transition to civilian life is not an easy one for any service member, but it's the closest to hell I've ever been. The effects of trauma have a way of showing up at the worst times, in the worst way. I had ceased to be a wife a long time ago. Now I was a roommate, caretaker, administrator, nurse, whipping post. His rock bottom presented itself in the form of getting arrested for falling asleep drunk in his truck on the side of a mountain highway and having to meet his son's eyes when he picked him up from the Sheriff's office.

The decision for therapy was more of an ultimatum, and so began a different kind of fight. In search of a therapist, my husband encountered new obstacles. We were stuck in the VA healthcare system, a vast and complicated warren of unknowledgeable, uncaring administrators. Providers who were not fluent in the language of the injured warrior changed frequently, and were mostly interested in prescribing medication...lots of it. Appointments were few and far between. They expect people that are secretive by nature of their job, warriors who have never been vulnerable a day in their life, to suddenly want to unpack their years of trauma to a veritable stranger. Well, that's not happening. It's a frustrating and disheartening realization that even the VA doesn't know how the VA works, yet they expect broken, hurting people fresh from decades of war to figure it out. It's no surprise when you hear veterans are blowing their brains out in the VA parking lot. We both realized quickly that medication and sporadic talk therapy were not going to be effective, and continued to feel hopeless.

The entire family was suffering and we knew we were at a breaking point. I can not stress enough the absolute brick wall that is the time of transition to civilian life. Even if you have your whole plan on paper and organized on spreadsheets, you will still feel like you have fallen down a well. So much happened at once; we were no longer allowed to live in base housing, we were having a house built, my father in law died, we both were changing jobs, our kids had left the house, and let's not forget the isolation of COVID lockdown... for someone who is struggling with just regular day to day life, with very little resilience left, this feels insurmountable. After struggling to find appropriate mental health care, my husband started hearing about Ibogaine treatment from other veterans, and we decided to figure out a way to send him to a retreat. It's not cheap, there are questions about its legality, and finding a reputable retreat center was incredibly important for safety reasons. He was able to get a grant from a fellow SEAL's non-profit to a vetted retreat center and we held our breath.

It's not magic, but it felt like it to all of us. He was given some much needed relief, a chance to hit "pause" and catch his breath for long enough to incorporate new skills he was learning through the concurrent integration process. His craving for alcohol was GONE! It's been over 4 years and it is still non-existent. Then I went, too, working with psilocybin. I released years worth of tears, from childhood trauma to hurt from my battered marriage, and the grip of helplessness eased. We were able to reconnect to our core selves, and then each other and begin our parallel paths to becoming fuller versions of ourselves, shedding the layers of guilt, shame, blame, regret, and pain that had been holding us prisoner for so long. To wake up without the weight of imminent fallout is a gift I never thought I would experience again.

Psychedelic therapy prompted massive post-traumatic growth for our whole family., and the work continues. We are the statistic we always wanted to be...still married after a SOF career. I believe it's only about 6% that can claim that. We are much more present for each other and our kids, and they have noticed the vast difference in us both. They can relax knowing they don't

have to worry about us. We are no longer stuck in survival mode. We are not only living, we are thriving. Now my husband is finding purpose in peer mentoring other veterans that seek psychedelic treatment, using the attributes that made him a great warrior on a new mission to forge a path for others in his community. I have furthered my education and am now a certified coach for first responders undergoing psychedelic therapies. It works. If you are willing to face your demons and do the work of forming new habits and practices, and are searching for a more holistic approach to real healing, psychedelics can be an incredible tool. It's attainable, and most importantly, sustainable. No more years of meds or down spiraling. No more melting down. No more thoughts of suicide. Now we focus on living...and thriving.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i. We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities.

Mahalo,

Jessica Silva

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 7:00:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Patrick Boll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senate Members,

Mental health is a complex topic but it's obvious the methods that have been used for decades have serious shortcomings. I believe it's important to consider emerging therapies that, have shown serious hope in people struggling with mental health and I strongly support SB1042.

Mahalo,

Patrick Boll

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 4:14:20 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vicky Farmer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Ways & Means | 2025 Legislative Session

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee,

My name is Vicky Farmer. I live on the Big Island and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to life saving care.

The rates of suicide amongst servicemembers was recorded at 22 a day for years. A decade or so later, we realize that many states were not even recording suicides among veterans; it is closer to a staggering 50 VETERANS a day. That is an incredible tragedy for those who signed a blank check in service to this country. An untold number of servicemembers have sought lifesaving emerging therapies out of the country to include ibogaine, ayahuasca, psilocybin and more.

The title of my testimony is Ex Tenebris Lux. I am a military spouse but not a deployment spouse. I shouldn't have to be here. My husband served for 22 years in the army within special operations during the height of the war. I don't think that when he entered the military at the age of 17 he believed he would live to 40. When he got out he left with a dd214 and a handful of medals that represented many of the worst days in his life. There were many.

Several years ago we found ourselves in "crisis" if you don't know what that means it means "suicidal." During that time I had thoughts of "will my baby grow up without a father, will I continue this life without my husband?" I believe the statistic after one deployment is 30% chance of having PTS; my husband did 10 combat deployments. That's 300%. Sadly, the odds were never in his favor. He was also part of an A team which is considered tip of the spear. He was an engineer which is a fancy word for blowing things up. His exposure to IEDs, burn pits,

heavy weaponry, mass casualties, near misses, being shot several times, losing teammates first to the war, then to the PTS it's no surprise he ended up in crisis. He hid it well, at first. I didn't deal with the waking up screaming due to nightmares or punching holes in the wall, or severe alcoholism, they were more silent symptoms. That also means he suffered in silence. The military prepared him for war not expecting he would survive. He did. He survived the war abroad but almost lost the war at home. He returned severely wounded; mind, body and spirit.

I consider myself lucky. He was open to anything that might help. He left the VA on 13 medications that left him feeling like a zombie; we've tried music therapy, art therapy, talk therapy, equine therapy, neurofeedback, alpha stim, transcendental meditation, mERt, hyperbaric oxygen treatment, prolonged exposure, emdr, I say "we", because we are a team. I was and have always been his fierce advocate. I'm not commenting on the efficacy of these treatments but for him they barely scratched the surface. By the time he was in crisis several years ago articles and studies about psychedelics started appearing in my newsfeed. I can tell you at that point my first thought was "fuck no!" Putting veterans in crisis, especially those who are highly trained on something that makes them hallucinate sounds like a terrible fucking idea.

How uneducated I was at that time. I had very limited understanding of the history of psychedelics and grew up during the DARE era, thank you Nancy. After that point I did some research, I learned the history, read study after study, listened to podcast by leading experts... which lead me to finding VETs. We are incredibly grateful for Amber and Marcus Capone who started VETs. We both applied and were approved as grant recipients to access psychedelic medicine outside of the country. They believe the healing model includes not just the veteran but also the spouses; the foundation of the family. It's not a magic pill, it's more like a catalyst. It gave him profound relief and neuroplasticity and space to process many of the events he experienced. It is a process. He still had to do integration work. The set, setting and integration was of the utmost importance. As a spouse who wasn't present during deployments my good friend told me "you didn't go to the party but you were stuck cleaning up the mess" - the wives the children we become the collateral damage and we experience secondary pts as a result of their wounds. My husband served his country for 22 years yet had to leave the country to access effective treatment. That's UNACCEPTABLE. That's why I said I shouldn't have to be here telling my story; our story. Yet here I am. Generational trauma is real. It is expressed and passed down in our dna something called epigenetics. TRAUMA affects not just the veteran but the entire family. I'm here to tell you that HEALING has the same effect. It has a ripple effect. Generational healing is possible. Ex tenebris lux means "out of darkness, there is light". I'm hoping that you will take this upon yourselves to see there is light and hope. This is an opportunity to be a part of that light and become a beacon to carry this hope to many underserved high risk populations during this legislative era. Thank you for your time and allowing me to share my story.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-

life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai‘i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai‘i. We do not want the citizens of Hawai‘i to miss out on these healing modalities.

Mahalo,

Vicky Farmer

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 7:00:38 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Julia moritz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

my name is Julia and I am a Honolulu paramedic. I see mental health emergencies everyday and understand the dire need for a change in alternative therapies. I support psychedelic science for patients in Hawaii. We have a crisis on our hands with incredibly high addiction rates and mental health deterioration. Many other cities and states have legalized plant medicines and proven psychedelic treatments for therapeutic use. Mental health in this country is an absolute crisis, and with little proven adverse effects of this range of therapies, we have only to gain the wellbeing and health of our people.

mahalo, Julia

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 7:02:42 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marissa Blake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha senate members,

I strongly support this. Mahalo

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 7:03:31 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Liam Martens	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Members,

I'm a newcomer to the civics process here in the state of Hawaii and I would like to submit my first written testimony IN SUPPORT OF SB1042. Any society that decides it wants to value and help those struggling with mental illness should explore all the treatment options available.

Thank you for your time and energy,

Liam Martens

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 7:13:16 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doorae Shin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of SB1042**

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Wednesday February 19, 2025 at 10:02am | CR 211 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee,

My name is Doorae Shin, I live in Aina Haina on O‘ahu, and I am testifying in strong support of SB1042. This measure creates a mental health emerging therapies fund to begin clinical research and train professionals around emerging therapies and educate the public about harm reduction and mental health awareness.

The movement to create safe, therapeutic access to emerging and breakthrough therapies is one that is growing across cities, states, at a federal level, and within academic and medical institutions. Following in the steps of both Oregon, Colorado, Texas and under guidance from those who helped to design and implement those State programs, the passage of SB1042 would pave the path for our community members who are suffering to finally have legal access to safe, non-addictive, and effective therapeutic options to find the relief they need. These therapies include psilocybin and MDMA, which continue to show groundbreaking efficacy in treating and in some cases even resolving symptoms for depression, addiction, PTSD, anxiety, and more.

In addition to the growing foundation of research showing the safety and efficacy of emerging / breakthrough therapies in treating some of the most common (and difficult-to-treat) mental illnesses, we also see a large number of academic institutions and medical hospitals opening up psychedelic research and healing centers. These include but are not limited to:

1. Yale Program for Psychedelic Science
2. The Johns Hopkins Center for Psychedelic and Consciousness Research
3. University of California: Berkeley Center for the Science of Psychedelics
4. Massachusetts General Hospital: Center for the Neuroscience of Psychedelics
5. The Center for Psychedelic Medicine at New York University's Department of Psychiatry
6. The Centre for Psychedelic Research at Imperial College in London
7. The Center for Psychedelic Research and Therapy at The University of Texas at Austin’s Dell Medical School
8. Mount Sinai Icahn School of Medicine: Center for Psychedelic Psychotherapy and Trauma Research

9. Treatment & Research In Psychedelics program at Pacific Neuroscience Institute
10. University of Wisconsin: Transdisciplinary Center for Research in Psychoactive Substances

Please pass SB1042 so we can adequately conduct research, train professionals, and prepare Hawai'i to offer safe access to these therapeutic options. Mahalo for your consideration of this testimony in strong support of SB1042.

Doora Shin  
Community Member and Project Manager of Clarity Project  
Honolulu, HI

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 8:03:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elena Theofilatos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)**

**Senate Committee on Ways & Means | 2025 Legislative Session**

**Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee,**

**My name is Elena Theofilatos, I live in Pahoā, Hawai'i and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to**

**As a psychotherapist (LMSW), I have been encountering people of all walks of life. Many of them turn to therapy only after many years of living in distress. Traditional talk therapies can help those folks but some still go back to their old hurtful patterns of thinking, like deep self-hatred and self-deprecation. It is because such wounds, when they are deep and being passed from generation to generation, do not easily heal with talking story alone. Deep self-blame needs interventions that shift ones' frame of mind so that they can break free from the chains of inferiority and shame they have put themselves into. I was one of them at some point in the past.**

**I immigrated by myself to the United States in 2010 and had a very rough first 2 years of living there that caused me feeling helpless and hopeless. What saved me then was not therapy (I did not have access to it), but a personal experience with psilocybin mushrooms that I took in a ceremonial way, in a forest by myself. For the first time in months, I remembered what it was like to feel truly joyful and happy again. I felt connected to the nature around me and it was inspiring me to keep living, fighting, surviving. I felt like a child of God that got lost but is deserving of love like everyone else. It was profoundly healing.**

**I honestly do not know if I could have ever gotten to such a deep healing experience if it was not for psilocybin mushrooms. I was in deep awe and I could see my depression and self-criticism as something that I did not have to carry around. It was exhilarating! I believe that each human, each client of mine possesses this kind of inner intelligence and that psilocybin mushrooms and MDMA can provide people with a way to access it and that talk therapy alone might never do that so effectively.**

**And if talk therapy would be able to provide such an experience, it can take months or even years. The problem is that we, therapists, do not have many years or months of sessions especially when we treat those suffering from depression. Everytime a client with depression comes to me, I treat our meeting as if it is our last one. It is because I never know if they decide to come back. And I think so not because I am afraid that I can say or do something wrong that pushes them away. I am confident in my skills as a therapist, but I am not confident in my depressed client's ability to find motivation and hope needed to leave their house and engage with me/the world. Any moment, especially those of them for whom depression has persisted for many years, can decide that there is no point in trying to get better/going to therapy. We need to offer these clients new therapies that can create rapid positive shifts if provided in a well supported therapeutic way.**

**While I believe that not everyone is a good candidate for psilocybin mushrooms/MDMA therapy, and that ample amount of time needs to be spent on building trust with a client before even considering such therapist to them, I am well aware of clients can feel that therapy is just a waste of time when they are really stuck in a pattern that they have been struggling to shift for a long time. It can drain all hope out of the person and hope is a precious resource that can shift mountains of obstacles. If hope is lost, everything good in therapy follows its suit very quickly. If nothing else psilocybin mushrooms/MDMA therapy can re-ignite one's hope and that brings us half the battle closer to the win!**

**This is why I am advocating for establishing safe places for people to have journeys with psilocybin mushrooms and MDMA in a supported way so that they do not have to go to the forest like I did. I sometimes wonder how my friends let me do that journey all alone, knowing it was my first time? What if I got hurt physically or needed someone to hold the space for me?**

**When someone is desperate for healing, like I was then, for them the potential benefits of taking such potent substances outweigh the risks. This is why when we prohibit people utilizing psilocybin mushrooms and MDMA in a therapeutic way legally, they then find a way to do them illegally, exposing themselves to all the dangers of being unsupervised and even, in the worst case scenario, having to deal with the law enforcement while all they wanted to do is to find some light in the end of the tunnel that they have been in.**

**It is about the time we stop holding people's desire to heal against them and provide safe places and trained people for them.**

**Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-**

**addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.**

**States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.**

**With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i. We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities.**

**Mahalo,  
Elena Theofilatos, LMSW**

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 8:13:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Spiro Theofilatos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Ways & Means | 2025 Legislative Session

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee,

My name is Spiro Theofilatos, I live in Pahoia on the Big Island, and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies.

I can say, with firm conviction, that had I not discovered psychedelics, I would not be alive today. My depression as a teenager was debilitating, with suicidal ideation being a daily reality I had to face. The absurdity of selling the hours of my life to a hostile world that *might* reward me after 50 or so years with a retirement fund or Social Security checks was simply a life path I was not willing to endure. I was not sent down the path of psychiatric drugs as my emotionally distant parents never saw my condition as serious enough to justify the expense, but thankfully, I discovered psychedelics when I was 19. My experiences changed my outlook and attitude about life so radically that not only did my severe depression dissipate, I found myself intensely motivated to master music production, and went on to release records on prominent underground labels and perform music across the United States for 15 years. When I began to see the consumption of fossil fuels as a problem that could eventually doom the planet, I stopped touring and played a significant role in building New York City's first biodiesel company. I then found myself inspired to improve the health of as many people as possible, so I launched what quickly became a successful kombucha company. Soon after, I was able to retire early and move to Hawai'i. I attribute all my great leaps forward in life to insights and inspiration from psychedelic experiences.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a

wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i. We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities.

Mahalo,

Spiro Theofilatos

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 8:35:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tasman Kekai Mattox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mental health is a serious issue for many and people need more support.

## Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Ways & Means | 2025 Legislative Session

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee,

My name is Leif Reynolds, and I am here today to express my strong support for the passage of this bill, which would fund clinical research on psychedelic treatments. This is not just policy to me—it is personal.

I served in the military for eight years, and during that time, I witnessed firsthand the toll that service takes on mental health. I have struggled myself, and I have seen my fellow service members fight battles that no one else could see. Tragically, some of them lost that fight. I have mourned brothers and sisters in uniform who died by suicide, and I cannot help but wonder—had they had access to psychedelic-assisted therapy, would they still be here today? I truly believe they might.

For too long, we have relied on treatments that do not work for everyone. Many who serve and sacrifice for our country come home to find that the available mental health care options are inadequate, ineffective, or riddled with stigma. Meanwhile, we are seeing overwhelming evidence from scientific studies and clinical trials that psychedelic-assisted therapy can be a game-changer, offering healing in ways traditional methods cannot. These therapies have the potential to help those suffering from PTSD, depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders—conditions that have taken too many lives already.

Motivated by my experiences and the urgent need for better solutions, I pursued a degree in psychology at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. My passion for this field only grew stronger, and I am now nearing the completion of my Master's degree in Clinical Psychology at Chaminade University here on O'ahu. My goal is to integrate psychedelic treatments into therapy because I believe they allow us to access parts of ourselves that are otherwise unreachable—unlocking healing that has remained out of reach for too many.

Right now, people in Hawai'i who seek psychedelic treatment must travel internationally, facing financial and logistical barriers that make healing inaccessible to those who need it most. By passing this bill, we can change that. We can ensure that groundbreaking treatments are available here at home, providing hope for countless individuals, including veterans, first responders, and many others who have endured trauma.

This bill is not just about research; it is about saving lives. It is about offering hope where there was once only despair. It is about taking action so that fewer families experience the heartbreak of losing someone to a battle they should not have to fight alone.

I urge you to pass this bill, to invest in the future of mental health care, and to help bring healing to those who need it most. Thank you for your time, your consideration, and your commitment to making a real difference.

Mahalo,

Leif Reynolds

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 10:40:29 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amanda Lillibridge	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Ways & Means | 2025 Legislative Session

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee,

My name is Amanda Lillibridge, I live in Honolulu, Hawai'i and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies.

Outside of the undeniable science that has proven the efficacy of psychedelic breakthrough therapies as effective healing modalities, I can add that my anecdotal experience with the medicine has been nothing short of profound.

These modalities have played a monumental role in my own personal health journey and trauma. I can say without a doubt that I would not have found the hope, perspective shift, or healing from debilitating adolescent trauma without having encountered this medicine.

I urge you to move forward with this initiative because everyone deserves safe access to this incredibly powerful tool in what has been proven to be a broken mental health system. We can empower our community by taking this step toward offering them a safe and equitable spaces to heal.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration - Please support SB1042.

With aloha, Amanda Lillibridge

Aloha,

What if there was a path to healing that could transform not just individuals but entire families? This is the promise of psychedelic therapies, and I stand in full support of proposed bill SB 1042.

My name is Erika Manzano. I am a veteran, the spouse of a veteran, and a mother. Throughout my life, I have battled the shadow of depression and PTSD, shaping my existence in profound ways. Yet, in the past four years, I have witnessed a remarkable transformation—first in my husband, next myself and then within our family unit. As well as, in many other veterans and their families seeking solace from their trauma. These therapies unlock a depth of expression that traditional treatments often fail to reach. They foster not only healing for the individual but also create a ripple effect that can mend generational trauma within families. The evolution I have witnessed through these treatments is something one must experience firsthand to comprehend. Even then, it is difficult to find words to adequately describe the profound gift of life that these incredible therapies restore to us.

My struggle with anxiety and depression began at the age of five, when I experienced trauma at the hands of my mother's fiancé. From that moment, every day was overshadowed by an overwhelming sense of fear and worry. Even playtime was tainted by his unwanted presence, transforming my childhood into a realm of distress. Unfortunately, this sense of turmoil persisted even after he was removed from my life, following me into my teenage years and adulthood.

At 19, I joined the Navy, believing it would offer the safety I so desperately craved. However, I quickly realized how naïve I had been. Sexual harassment was a constant during my service, culminating in an instance of rape. When I tried to report the harassment, I found no support, leading me to bury that painful experience deep within. Convinced it was my fault, I absorbed the blame and allowed shame to erode my self-worth.

For years, I believed that my accomplishments—raising three children, maintaining a marriage—somehow shielded me from the impact of my trauma. I thought I was coping better than others because I was not struggling with addiction, I had a successful career and from the outside my marriage looked perfect. Yet I came to realize that by suppressing my pain, I was harming my mental and physical well-being.

In 2021, after 13 years of marriage to my husband Randy, we appeared to have it all, but we were struggling beneath the surface. Randy was battling his own traumas and PTSD, leading me to fear that our relationship could end. Thankfully, he reached out to a veteran friend who introduced him to the transformative power of psychedelics at a treatment retreat in Mexico.

The change I witnessed in Randy after just five days was astounding. He returned calm and reflective, having made profound progress. Inspired by his journey, I began confronting my own traumas. Although I had been experiencing panic attacks, I initially resisted seeking help. Eventually, I traveled to Mexico for my own psychedelic experience in 2022.

Words cannot express how transformative this journey was. It helped me feel deeply for the first time, reconnecting with my children and my emotions. I learned to manage my anxiety in everyday life, a freedom I had not known before. This transformation has positively impacted our family dynamics. Our children, once hesitant to share their feelings, now openly communicate and show vulnerability.

Now, as I support fellow veterans on their own journeys, I see the same hope rekindled in them. Many arrive feeling hopeless, yet leave transformed, eager to embrace life and reconnect with their families.

My personal experiences and those of others emphasize the urgent need for measures like those proposed in SB 1042. I understand the apprehensions surrounding psychedelics, given decades of negative narratives. However, these substances have been used for centuries in traditional ceremonies, and esteemed research institutions are currently investigating their therapeutic potential.

Schools such as Johns Hopkins, Yale, Harvard, and Stanford are at the forefront of this research, exploring the effects of psychedelics on mental health conditions like depression, anxiety, and addiction. These studies are vital in recognizing the value of psychedelics in treating mental health issues.

SB 1042 aims to increase the understanding of these therapies by ensuring their safety through studies on best practices for administering medicines, the crucial integration process, and educating those who assist with integration. Additionally, it promotes the use of these therapies within the U.S. Currently, veterans and others must leave their families and country to access these therapies, which adds stress and financial burden—costs that many cannot afford. As a result, individuals often turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as alcohol or drugs, or even consider suicide.

In closing, my journey stands as a testament to the transformative healing potential of psychedelic therapies, igniting hope not only for myself and my family but for countless individuals grappling with trauma. I urge you to approach this bill with a mindset transcending the mere classification of psychedelics as a drug. Rather, consider the profound impact these substances have had on the lives of those who have experienced their restorative powers. Let us shift the focus to the narratives of those who have triumphed over addiction and reclaimed their lives through these revolutionary therapies. Together, we can champion a future where healing is within reach for all who suffer. Support SB 1042.

Erika Manzano

[Erika.Manzano0804@gmail.com](mailto:Erika.Manzano0804@gmail.com)

619-301-9640

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 6:42:14 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Randall Manzano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Warmest Aloha Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Randy Manzano and I live in Iroquois Point, Ewa Beach Hawaii, and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to various therapeutic plant medicines and other modalities currently only being offered overseas or underground.

As a 25yr U.S. Navy Veteran, I spent nearly 17yrs with the Naval Special Operations Forces either in combat, or training for combat operations. As a son of a Vietnam veteran, I know and see now the mental and physical toll combat operations took on my father in my upbringing, as well as my own life with my wife and three children.

Before retiring from the U.S. Navy in 2016 here on Oahu, I started to feel and display symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress (PTS), resulting in me seeking mental health assistance.

My mental health journey started with 5 weeks of outpatient classes, and weekly check ins with DOD therapist. Although these classes may have educated me, it did nothing to ease my symptoms, nor help me integrate with my wife and children.

Due to ongoing symptoms, I elected to receive the Stellate Ganglion Block shot to help relieve my PTS symptoms. I received a total of 4 shots in a year. Although the therapy relieved some of my symptoms, and gave me time to control my reaction, it was short lived, and my mental health appeared to be getting worse.

I was then selected to go through inpatient care with retired/separated DOD personnel. This was an intense 8 week program. I would say this program led me to believe that I was not ok, and that I needed help. Although I was open to the talk therapy and different ways to manage anger, stress, anxiety and depression, I was not interested in pharmaceuticals to help with the symptoms of PTS.

After retirement in 2016 my symptoms crept back and I sought out help from the VA and VET Center. When I look back at my handling of my health from 2016 to 2021 I can honestly say that I was just holding on, and waiting my time to die. My relationship with my wife and kids became worse, and in 2021 I was ready to disappear. It was ultimately this time when I reached out to a friend for help. I knew my team mates were crossing the border to Mexico to use psychedelic plant Medicines to heal from PTS, TBI, and drug/alcohol addiction. I have never done psychedelics, nor any hard drugs, but had no apprehensions about trying it to save my life and family.

On

October 2021 I left for my 4 day trip to Mexico to use Ibogaine and 5MEO-DMT with 5 other service members suffering from PTS and TBI symptoms. To say these plant medicines saved my life would truly be an understatement. Since my treatment, I stopped using tobacco products without intentionally trying to stop. My relationships with family and friends have gotten better. I see, hear and lead life with a different view. Although symptoms of PTS will always be with me, I've learned to manage my mind and body to regulate how my mind affects my actions.

The changes I made in my own life were so profound that in Sept 2022 my wife decided to seek help for her own military related trauma.

The changes both my wife and I have made in our lives because of the access and use of psychedelics has been life altering. We now seek a life of service to others. Since our retreats, we've both served as hosts, support and coaches at AMBIO Life Sciences and The Mission Within for over 70 participants seeking relief. We participate in weekly integration meetings, meditation/mindfulness groups, and Peer to Peer support with veterans and first responders. To serve as witness and see/hear life change in a person in 4 days is without question a blessing. And I look forward to a life serving others to find their true self.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai‘i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

We do not want the citizens of Hawai‘i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai‘i.

Sent with immense gratitude,

Mahalo,

Randy Manzano

Jaye Olson  
Ewa Beach, HI 96706  
10 February 2025

Dear Committee Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Jaye Olson, and I live in Ewa Beach, Hawaii. I am writing to express my support for Bill SB1042, "Mental Health Emerging Therapies Special Fund," which establishes a special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to care through integration before, during, and after psychedelic-assisted therapy.

As a combat veteran with over 21 years of service, I've witnessed personally how psychedelics can change someone's life. I suffer from severe anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and insomnia. I've seen and done things in the Army that no human being should ever have to witness or endure. My world was crushed when a close friend took his beautiful, irreplaceable life. He was like a brother to me; he was compassionate and empathetic. He was battling inside, as were several of the leaders I knew, but seeking help for our mental health was frowned upon or viewed as weak. I told my leadership that I just lost a brother, and they said to me with little empathy, "Let's run it off." From that day on, everything spiraled out of control for me. I became numb and lost my motivation. This merely added to my years of nightmares, insomnia, high anxiety with hidden panic attacks, and a lengthy list of health conditions that I hadn't seen a doctor about. I felt helpless and alone like I couldn't go on, and I attempted suicide twice.

I had a successful military career thus far and decided to seek assistance outside of the service. I paid out of pocket for one session and some medication, which made me feel even more distant from reality and like a zombie. I stopped taking the prescription and proceeded to pretend everything was fine. My physical and mental health rapidly deteriorated.

One of my sons was diagnosed with severe autism spectrum disorder (level 3). We established ABA services on the island and were receiving excellent care. I came down on orders to PCS, but the ABA therapy there had a year-long waitlist. After over 20 years of service, I decided to go through the Medical Board process to ensure that my son continued to receive therapy; I wasn't ready to retire. I felt like I went from hero to zero in 2.5 seconds, with no true purpose in life. When I retired, I was on over nine medications, my body felt sluggish, and my mental health wasn't improving. I wasn't adjusting to civilian life as well as I thought. Covid struck, and I enrolled in a 21-day outpatient program that was over the internet. The program was

helpful, yet there was something missing. I kept falling into a vicious cycle of weight gain, my mental health continued to deteriorate, and I felt defeated.

It wasn't until a friend of mine, who suffers from similar issues as I do, told me about a life-changing experience he had with a plant medicine called ayahuasca. I could see the change in him that he was free from all those boulders being on top of him for the past 20 years and he wasn't so cynical. At this point in my life, I was willing to try anything, even if that meant going against what I believed in.

The first time I tried plant medicine was at a veteran's retreat. My journey with the medicine was the most profound experience I had ever had. At first, I was scared that I was going to have a bad experience and be taken advantage of, but it was the very opposite. Through one of my experiences, my intentions were better to understand my neurodivergent son and for better health. My journey showed me where the synapsis in his brain was not connected and firing. He also has sensory overloads with screaming episodes that can last for hours. These episodes would trigger my anxiety, and I would flip out. In one of my journeys, I was able to experience and feel what my son would go through with his sensory overloads, and now I can sympathize with him and give him the care that he needs from the care that I received while I was in the medicine. I am currently only on three meds. I still have a long way to go with my mental and physical health, but I'm further along than I was before my journeys. I think if I had a better integration period, I would be farther along with my recovery.

I know without a shadow of a doubt that funding these emerging therapies is going to be life changing and saving for many to come. Funding this project will help incorporate an integration process that will be needed to help everyone in their recovery. Funding will also help with the homeless population and those who have addiction problems because I know that plant medicine and other psychedelic medicines can help this population.

In conclusion, I strongly urge you to support Bill SB1042 because I know firsthand that psychedelic therapy works and is a life-transforming medicine, but without the proper integration process, the medicine won't be as effective as it can be. Please keep an open mind when you make your decision. We need you to help us make this happen by funding this project. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Jaye Olson

Phone: 254.702.9385

Email: [jayeolson34@gmail.com](mailto:jayeolson34@gmail.com)

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 8:29:07 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Egbo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of SB1042**

**Senate Committee on Ways & Means | 2025 Legislative Session**

**Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee,**

My name is **Christopher Egbo**, and I live in the **Punchbowl neighborhood**. I am writing to express my **strong support** for **SB1042**, which establishes a **Mental Health Emerging Therapies Special Fund** to support **clinical trials, professional training, and research** on breakthrough mental health treatments. This bill would help facilitate **safe and effective patient access** to innovative therapies that have the potential to transform lives.

Medicinal medicine is the way of the future. In order to have safe and healthy communities we most fund and support all forms of hostic medicine.

Over the past two decades, researchers worldwide have expanded our scientific understanding of **breakthrough mental health therapies**. With growing certainty, **scientists, medical professionals, and policymakers** are working together to ensure **safe, legal access to non-addictive, evidence-based treatments** such as **psilocybin and MDMA**.

**Research from major institutions worldwide has demonstrated psilocybin’s effectiveness in treating:**

- **Anxiety**
- **Addiction**
- **Depression**
- **End-of-life distress**
- **Other psychiatric disorders**

Similarly, **MDMA has shown groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**. Due to these promising results, the **U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has granted both psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation**, recognizing their potential as **some of the most effective, non-addictive treatment options** for individuals with treatment-resistant mental health conditions.

**States have a critical role to play** in expanding access to these therapies. Measures like Oregon's **Measure 109 (2020)** and Colorado's **Natural Medicine Health Act (2022)** have paved the way for individuals suffering from **treatment-resistant mental health conditions** to receive the care they desperately need. If SB1042 passes, **Hawai'i will join other forward-thinking states** such as **Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington**, all of which have **funded research and trials** for these breakthrough therapies in recent years.

With mental health concerns affecting more people in our communities than ever before, **everyone knows someone who could benefit from access to these life-changing treatments.** Please support SB1042 to **ensure that Hawai'i residents have a legal, regulated pathway to these innovative therapies** rather than being left behind as other states move forward.

**Mahalo for your time and consideration.**

Sincerely,  
**Christopher Egbo**

## Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Health | February 12 @ 1pm

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Josh Sze, I live in Hilo and I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to

I am a proud 10-year veteran of the United States Navy. I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which seeks to advance research into the therapeutic potential of psilocybin for mental health conditions. As someone who has personally struggled with PTSD, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation, I can attest to the life-saving potential of psilocybin therapy.

Like many veterans, I returned home carrying invisible wounds. The treatments available through traditional medicine—SSRIs, mood stabilizers, and talk therapy—failed to provide lasting relief. For years, I struggled under the weight of these conditions, feeling hopeless and isolated. However, my experience with psilocybin was transformative. Under proper guidance and in a controlled setting, it provided me with clarity, relief, and a renewed sense of purpose. The experience helped me process trauma in ways that conventional treatments never could, and ultimately, it saved my life.

I have gone thru psilocybin, ketamine and MDMA treatments. Each one has been extremely beneficial in my healing process. It has opened my eyes to a whole new way of treating mental health issues. It is the reason I am still here and wasn't another victim to the VA medical system. It helped me transform my pain into purpose. I am currently going to school for Psychology so I can one day work with these substances and veterans, I know first hand the benefits of them when used in the proper set and setting.

Many of my fellow veterans are suffering, and too many have lost their battle to mental health conditions. Psilocybin-assisted therapy represents a promising, science-backed option that deserves further study and responsible implementation. I urge the committee to pass this bill and allow the necessary research to continue, offering hope to those who desperately need it.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD

respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. **If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.**

We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Josh Sze

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 9:18:07 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J Doe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**21-Year Combat Veteran Who Found Peace Through Psychedelics**

Senate Committee on Ways & Means | 2025 Legislative Session

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee,

I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to life saving care.

I write this testimony not just as a veteran but as a man who has walked the darkest roads of combat trauma, desperately searching for peace. I share my story in the hope that no other veteran will have to endure the same suffering without access to the healing they deserve.

For 21 years, I served as an Infantryman in the United States Army, completing four combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan—three of them with the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. Between 2004 and 2010, I was deployed every other year, my life a cycle of war, loss, and survival. The destruction it wrought on my mind was undeniable.

I have seen war in its most brutal form—engaging in relentless firefights, surviving a devastating IED blast, and standing amid the aftermath of bombings that tore innocent lives apart. I was trained to suppress my emotions, to push forward no matter the cost. And for years, I did just that.

But war does not simply end when the deployments stop. The battles followed me home. The nightmares, the anxiety, the unbearable weight of survivor’s guilt—they consumed me. I could not sit in a crowded room without scanning for threats. The sound of fireworks or a slammed door sent my heart racing. I became withdrawn, drowning in alcohol to numb the relentless torment. I told myself I was fine. I wasn’t.

Friends urged me to seek help, and eventually, I did. I placed my trust in the military’s Mental Health Department, hoping for relief. But what I found instead was a system that failed me. My therapist was more invested in experimental treatments for her research than in truly understanding my pain. My provider handed me prescription after prescription without

considering the consequences. Soon, I was on a cocktail of medications that left me hollow—manic one moment, detached the next. The drugs dulled the pain, but they stole the rest of me in the process.

For four years, I fought through therapy, clinging to the hope that something would change. But I remained a shadow of myself, a medicated ghost walking through life. Eventually, the Army medically retired me—not just for my physical injuries, but because my mind had been pushed beyond its limits.

Then, everything changed. A fellow veteran told me about a retreat offering Ayahuasca therapy. At first, I dismissed it. Psychedelic medicine had never been on my radar. But I was desperate—buried under eight prescriptions, trapped in a cycle of despair, and rapidly losing hope. So I went.

For three days, I sat in ceremony, guided by experienced facilitators, embracing meditation, breathwork, and deep self-reflection. I was told that this was not a miracle cure, but a tool—one that could help my brain break free from the trauma that held it hostage. True healing, they said, would be my responsibility in the days and months to come.

The change was almost immediate. At the airport, where I would normally feel suffocated by crowds and noise, I felt calm for the first time in years. Over the next few weeks, I noticed something incredible—I was no longer trapped in a constant state of hyper-vigilance. My mind was clearing, my soul was stirring. Within a month, I cut my medications in half. Within three months, I was off them entirely. Something I once believed impossible had become my reality.

Since then, I have explored additional treatments, including ketamine therapy through the Department of Veterans Affairs, which significantly improved my nightmares and anxiety. Each experience has brought me closer to peace, allowing me to reclaim the life I thought was lost forever.

Today, I am in the best mental and emotional state of my life. I am no longer just surviving—I am living. I have dedicated myself to advocating for these treatments, guiding fellow veterans toward the healing they, too, deserve. Many have experienced the same transformation—stepping away from pharmaceuticals, regaining control, and finding their way home to themselves.

I urge you to pass this bill. No veteran should have to travel to another country to find relief. No one who has sacrificed so much should be denied access to safe, effective treatment. It is time to give our warriors the care they need—the care they have earned.

MAJ (RET) United States Army

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 9:23:54 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael C. DeMattos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)**

Senate Committee on Ways & Means | 2025 Legislative Session

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee,

My name is Michael C. DeMattos and I am a social worker and professor who lives in Kāne‘ohe and I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to folks who have what some might call intractable conditions. As a social worker in the community who has studied the therapeutic use of psychedelics particularly to help with chemical dependency, PTSD, anxiety, and depression, I can tell you I have watched as folks ready to take their own lives rather than suffer through their personal hell, walk away from the proverbial ledge and into the arms of loved ones.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need.

**If passed, Hawai‘i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.**

With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai‘i. We do not want the citizens of Hawai‘i to miss out on these healing modalities.

Mahalo,

Michael C. DeMattos, MSW, PhD

## Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)

Senate Committee on Health

It's a cliché that just before you die, your life flashes before your eyes. My name is Elizabeth Snider and in April 2020, after sustaining two consecutive, life-threatening impacts that knocked me unconscious for more than 10 minutes, I can tell you- my life didn't flash, but it did stop. The impacts I suffered in a car accident resulted in a traumatic brain injury, specifically known as post-concussive syndrome and post-concussive PTSD, which provisionally delayed my reaching professional milestones and disrupted me from meeting my own basic human needs. I was unable to recall memories each morning, from the night before. I went from being a competitive PhD candidate with a minor in statistics, to not being able to spell my own name, write the date in correct order, or count simple math. The injury and lack of successful treatments made it necessary to withdraw my research applications and subsequently prevented me from entering graduate level research until this year. However, the injury did not damage my passion for research. Utilizing the treatments required for my recovery, I retrained myself over the last few years. In the process, I strengthened my commitments and developed deeper insights into the field of developmental psychology and neuroscience where there is clear overlap and undeniable need for expansive research when we combine psychedelics. More than two-thirds of the top 11 leading causes of death in the US are directly and indirectly reducible through the modern research SB 1042 makes possible.

Prior to my injury, after earning my baccalaureate degree and stabilizing financial support for my family, I had applied to graduate programs. Paradoxically, after the accident, when I regained consciousness, I could not recognize my name, no matter how loudly it was shouted. When I regained comprehension of my name, I misspelled it for months. Executive function and cognitive control eluded me. My sympathetic nervous system was failing me. I struggled for more than a month to recall simple details of my identity from before the collision, and I woke up unable to recall each yesterday. My identity seemed an unattainable remnant of who I had been. But terrible as this was, I forged vital connections and insights furthering both my progress and professional goals through modern and experimental medical modalities.

At my core, I am a researcher, and despite medical professionals giving me bleak prognosis, I persisted through experimental medicine and treatments. Although I was initially forced to step away from academic coursework and conventional research work, I regained my cognition and memory through research, self- advocacy and cutting-edge, experimental functional medicine and psychedelic treatment. Each day of those 40 months, I remained a student, learning about conditions and treatments. I remained a researcher, conducting a longitudinal case study on

myself. Every day, I assessed my condition, and identified varying control-group items and experimental conditions within my environment. I utilized my knowledge of research to scour reports in journal articles and cold-call clinics across the U.S. in search of viable treatment options. I devised strategies to obtain services and became an unwavering advocate for myself and others with similar ailments who were in desperate need of new combination treatments and psychedelic treatments. I understood from my previous research experiences that even insignificant findings could be utilized to inform what would work. I remained honest with myself and my care teams in relaying findings, despite my varying emotional states. Whenever doctors advised me to file for disability, I doubled down on research to treat and recover myself. Fueled by hope and new perspectives provided to me by psychedelic treatments and integration and my renewed passion for psychology, I was surviving by my scientific research habits colliding with new treatment modalities and psychedelics.

I discovered training for specialized injury and mental health treatment in a diverse and multi-disciplinary approach to the brain (Vasterling et al., 2012). I received my final functional neurology treatment with a newfound concernment in neuroscience and psychedelics. By learning how to use the neurological mechanisms of action in combination with psychedelics and modern medical treatments, my life was saved when I converted traumatic experiences into strength and recovery, and to advocate, heal and thrive. I identified the necessity to study how neural plasticity occurs beyond the context of particular diagnosis and how psychedelics influence and maximize the healing potential of neurological treatments. How I overcame my own near-death experience and survival-challenges, psychedelics and experimental functional medicine will remain a vital part of societal research and education.

Through intentional metacognitive practices in combination with these alternative modalities, I have fortified my cognitive capacity and emotional stamina to be successful in a multitude of environments including a rigorous graduate school environment. Those I treated with using these modalities also all have notable improvement. My experiences have taught me that research and cutting-edge medical options are not only immediately life-saving, this research is also life-changing, and we are determined to further this science and education for our future generations. My own lived experience originating from, identification with and record of working with underrepresented populations has sharpened my understanding of the absolute necessity for SB1042, now.

In an ever-changing world, the reliable piece I know is that SB1042 will save lives and prevent future harm here, now, in the state of Hawai'i. SB1042 is an asset to this state and Hawai'i citizens as well as far reaching beyond to save lives nationally.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. **If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.**

We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities. With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,  
Elizabeth Snider

Vasterling, J. J., Bryant, R. A., & Keane, T. M. (2012). *Ptsd and Mild Traumatic Brain Injury*. Guilford Press.

**LATE**

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 10:45:52 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carissa Cabrera	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for hearing my testimony today in support of SB1042 SD1 which would enable access to alternative therapy practices in Hawai'i. In the face of an increasing mental health crisis, it's important to support patients with an adaptive toolkit of mental health resources, understanding that one that may work for one individual works differently for another.

Mahalo,

Carissa Cabrera

**LATE**



## **Testimony in Support of SB 1042 – The Mental Health Emerging Therapies Act**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of SB 1042, a critical piece of legislation that addresses the urgent mental health crisis we are facing in Hawaii and across the nation.

I am the daughter of a US Marine who died by suicide after years of struggling with ineffective treatments. His life – and subsequent death – shaped me personally and professionally. I grew up very aware of the effects of stress and trauma, including war and combat, not only on the individual who experiences those things firsthand, but also the family, friends, and communities that experience so much in parallel. Since the mid-80s when he died, there have been great strides in understanding and treatment of trauma-related concerns; however, available treatments fall significantly short and do not work for many individuals. The focus of my work is on studying and supporting novel, rapid-acting interventions with potential to save lives. I am an expert in the psychoneurobiology of chronic stress pathology – namely posttraumatic stress, suicidality, and related symptom constellations and novel, rapid-acting interventions with potential to provide healing. My research focuses on the fine-grained understanding of the neurobiological and clinical mechanisms underlying psychoplastogens – a class of medications including traditional psychedelic medicines like psilocybin and ibogaine as well as the dissociative anesthetic and antidepressant ketamine - that produce rapid-onset and robust changes in functional brain connectivity or synaptic plasticity. My work and that of others suggests synaptic plasticity is likely the ‘golden key’ for understanding and treating stress- and trauma-related psychiatric conditions. The ultimate goal of my work is to shift treatment paradigms to improved, effective, personalized, and sustainable mental health outcomes that provide a foundation for people to not ‘simply tolerate existence,’ but importantly, to *build lives they truly want to live*.

I now lead a psilocybin-assisted therapy trial for Veterans with PTSD and a trial for Veterans with depression. I have authored multiple recent manuscripts reporting positive outcomes of ibogaine and 5-MeO-DMT treatment among Special Operations Forces Veterans and has published widely on studies of ketamine for stress- and trauma-related concerns. I have received honors and funding for my work from premier organizations including the Fulbright Association/US Department of State, Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Brain and Behavior Foundation (BBRF), the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), American College for Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP), Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA), International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS), and the International Society for Clinical Trials and Methodology (ISCTM).

My primary academic appointment is an Associate Professor at Baylor College of Medicine’s Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, where I serve as the Clinical Director of the Emerge Research Program and Co-Director of the Ethical Legal Implications of Psychedelics in Society (ELPISIS) Program. I also serve as the Director of Research at The Menninger Clinic, a private, non-profit psychiatric institution with a reputation for world-class research and clinical services. Further, I hold an appointment as a Clinical Research Psychologist at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston, maintain a faculty appointment at Yale School of Medicine and am a clinician and innovation expert advisor at NPSYT, PLLC. I am a co-founder and Chief Scientific Officer for Reason for Hope ~ Hope for

Reason, a non-profit organization focused on mental health and suicide prevention, specifically through supporting thoughtful policy for safe, equitable and ethical use of psychedelic medicines and assisted therapies. Further, I have served as subject matter expert for TX House Bill 1802 that passed with near unanimous bipartisan support and funds a clinical trial of psilocybin for Veterans with PTSD, which I now lead. I've also served as a subject matter expert for Connecticut's Psilocybin Work Group and was recently appointed to the Illinois Psychedelic Medicine Working Group, both created out of legislative process, as well as testifying in special briefings at the state and federal level in the US, Canada, and Australia on matters relating to thoughtful legislation around psychedelic medicine and assisted therapies.

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The need for **novel mental health interventions has never been more urgent**. Traditional treatments for conditions like treatment-resistant depression (TRD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and major depressive disorder (MDD), as well as associated concerns such as substance misuse and suicidality often take too long to work, are ineffective for many, or come with significant side effects.

Emerging therapies—including **psychedelic-assisted treatments like psilocybin and MDMA—offer a new frontier of hope**. These therapies have been designated by the FDA as **Breakthrough Therapies** due to their potential to provide rapid, robust, and long-lasting relief, particularly for those who have exhausted all other options.

SB 1042 is essential because it directly addresses four key areas that will drive progress in mental health care:

1. **Research and Development** – By establishing a **Mental Health Emerging Therapies Special Fund**, this bill will provide crucial resources to advance clinical research and FDA-regulated phase three trials. Public-private partnerships will accelerate our understanding of these treatments and ensure they are developed safely and effectively. As a researcher in this space myself, I am painfully aware of how significant and time consuming the hurdles are and how any lives are lost during these delays in advancing research.
2. **Education and Training** – The bill will ensure mental health professionals receive **specialized training** in these cutting-edge therapies. It also supports **public education initiatives** focused on harm reduction and mental health awareness—critical components for ensuring responsible and effective use. This provides a fantastic solution to a critical gap that exists currently – access to well trained providers that can support these life-saving interventions. By getting ahead of the curve and being proactive in training and education initiatives, HI is setting itself up for success, both before and after FDA approvals.
3. **Patient Access Programs** – This legislation prioritizes **compassionate use programs and patient access pilots** to expand availability for those most in need. Too many individuals are forced to travel out of state or seek underground treatments, which introduces significant risks. SB 1042 would provide a structured pathway for access in a regulated, evidence-based setting. To me, this is one of the most critical things we can do. We must consider untreated or under-treated stress- and trauma-related mental health concerns are life-threatening conditions, just as we would a cancer diagnosis for example. We must treat these conditions with the same grace and flexibility and access to potentially life-saving treatments, even if they are still experimental.

4. **Legislative Oversight and Accountability** – The bill requires **annual reporting** on funded studies, outcomes, and legislative recommendations. This ensures transparency, accountability, and the ability to adjust strategies based on emerging evidence.

## **Why This Matters**

Hawaii has the opportunity to be a leader in **advancing mental health innovation and greatly improving – and in many cases saving the lives of Hawaiian citizens**. Other states have already recognized the need for action: Texas, Maryland, Connecticut, and Arizona have all passed similar measures to fund psychedelic-assisted therapy research. SB 1042 allows Hawaii to **join this movement while tailoring solutions to our unique population needs**.

By investing in these emerging treatments, **we are not only transforming lives—we are building capacity, reducing barriers to care, and setting a precedent for responsible mental health innovation that provides a much-needed foundation for people who have struggled so significantly to find healing and build lives they truly want to live**. I urge you to pass SB 1042 and make a bold commitment to **scientifically backed, life-saving mental health interventions**.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions. Please note, I write on behalf of Reason for Hope, the Veterans Mental Health Leadership Coalition, and NPSYT only. While I include my other affiliations, these are for reference only. I am not speaking as a representative of these organizations.

Onward and upward,

Lynnette A. Averill, Ph.D.  
Chief Science Officer, Reason for Hope  
Chief Science Officer, Veterans Mental Health Leadership Coalition

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Associate Professor  
Clinical Director, Emerge Research Program  
Co-Director, Ethical Legal Implications of Psychedelics in Society (ELIPSIS) Program  
Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences  
Neuropsychiatry Division  
Psychology Division  
Baylor College of Medicine

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Director of Research  
The Menninger Clinic

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Clinical Research Psychologist  
Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center

-

Owner, Expert Advisor, Psychologist  
NPSYT, PLLC





**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 4:49:34 PM  
Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jadu Jagel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)**

Senate Committee on Ways & Means | 2025 Legislative Session

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee,

My name is Jadu Jagel, I live in Kailua on Oahu, and I am writing **in strong support of SB1042**, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to innovative and effective treatment like never before.

I specialize in the treatment of psychological trauma, anxiety, and depression. I'm licensed in California and Hawaii with over 20 years of experience in private practice and community psychotherapy. In my work I combine mindfulness/buddhist psychology, parts work, somatic integration, and depth psychotherapy. As a graduate student, I conducted dissertation research on psychedelic spiritual experiences (2004-2007). I rely on my understanding of psychedelic states of consciousness in encouraging my clients to deepen their human potential. We've known for a long time that when proper attention is given to set and setting, psychedelic assisted therapy is safe and effective while providing a new horizon for mental health and substance abuse/addiction recovery. The need and demand for breakthrough treatment exists in our community due to slow progress and/or treatment resistance. Brain science suggests that conventional treatment has limited success due to the tendency of the brain to default to procedural patterns. Meanwhile, psychedelics expand our psychological repertoire, as it were. They are uniquely fit for increasing mindfulness and self-compassion, empathy, acceptance and assisting the capacity to integrate difficult experiences and feelings. Not only are psychedelics non-addictive, unlike traditional psychotropic medications they don't result in dependency and need to be taken long term in order to achieve lasting benefits. They seem to hold the key to deeper, meaningful recovery from intractable versions of serious mental health disorders. Sadly, psychedelic therapies remain off limits due to outdated laws. Disabled veterans, mothers, fathers, and

everyday people deserve yet do not have legal access to effective treatment. You can change that starting with this bill.

Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. **If passed, Hawai'i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.**

With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai'i. We do not want the citizens of Hawai'i to miss out on these healing modalities.

Mahalo,

Jadu M. Jagel, PsyD

**LATE**

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 5:45:29 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB1042.SD1. Hawaiian Kingdom residents were to have free medical treatment at Queen's Hospital, created by Queen Emma and Kamehameha IV, but others wanted to profit for training others outside of Hawaii, as a Research facility instead. Time to change and forgive the debts to local families and include all medical facilities!

**LATE**

**SB-1042-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 12:34:05 AM  
Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Grant Goodman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [SB1042](#)  
Senate Committee on Ways & Means | 2025 Legislative Session

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the WAM Committee,

My name is Grant Goodman, I live in Honolulu and I am writing in strong support of SB1042, which establishes a mental health emerging therapies special fund to support clinical trials, training of mental health professionals, and more to bolster research and education around breakthrough therapies. This bill would help facilitate safe patient access to psilocybin.

I was suffering from severe addiction to xanax on and off for about seven years. I had been to jail twice both due to Xanax related offenses where i had done something under the influence. I had been kicked out of multiple friends homes and I resorted to living in my van for a small amount of time. During this time i started hearing about the the healing powers of psilocybin mushrooms. I had been to rehab once and had wanted to quit for so long but simply did not have to tools to do so with my thought patterns. I then had an experience with mushrooms that forever changed my life. In this four hour experience it showed me all the reason I had been using drugs to escape my reality. It showed me times in my life where I had denied who I was at my core to do what I was supposed to do and how each time i denied myself my drug and alcohol use turned up after each of these big moments. It allowed me to have a massive acceptance of who i am at my core and a massive letting go of everything i had been holding onto for years. I cried for hours realizing all of these profound things. It showed me how everything happens for a reason and everything in my life led me to this massive moment that I was having that ended up being the most important thing to ever happen to me in my life. I am now two years clean of Xanax and alcohol and ever since that experience I have felt free of both of these substances that entrapped me for years. I can say my mental head space is so much better now and i so needed this break in the harmful loop my mind was in for so long. I think this could be so useful to millions of people suffering just the same way i was suffering.

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Over the past two decades, researchers around the world have renewed scientific understanding of the benefits of breakthrough therapies, so it is with growing certainty that scientists and medical professionals are now working with policymakers to create access to safe and non-addictive therapies like psilocybin and MDMA for therapeutic uses. Research from major institutions around the world shows psilocybin to be a promising clinical treatment tool for a wide range of mental and psychiatric diagnoses including anxiety, addiction, depression, end-of-life anxiety, and more. Similarly, MDMA is showing groundbreaking efficacy in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a result, psilocybin and MDMA are increasingly considered some of the most effective, non-addictive, and safe treatment options for treatment-resistant depression and PTSD respectively, when administered in clinical settings. These impressive results have led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to grant psilocybin and MDMA their Breakthrough Therapy Designation.

States now have an essential role to play in the movement toward safe, legal, therapeutic access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Initiatives like the passage of Measure 109 in Oregon (2020) and Natural Medicine Health Act in Colorado (2022) are paving the way for people who suffer from treatment-resistant mental health ailments to get the help they need. If passed, Hawai‘i would also join Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland, Texas, and Washington, whose legislatures all passed bills funding research and trials for breakthrough therapies between 2021 and 2023.

With mental health becoming a more present issue in our communities, everyone knows someone who stands to benefit from access to psilocybin, MDMA and other breakthrough therapies. Please support this measure, which provides a legal pathway for therapeutic access to psilocybin in Hawai‘i. We do not want the citizens of Hawai‘i to miss out on these healing modalities.

Mahalo,

Grant Goodman