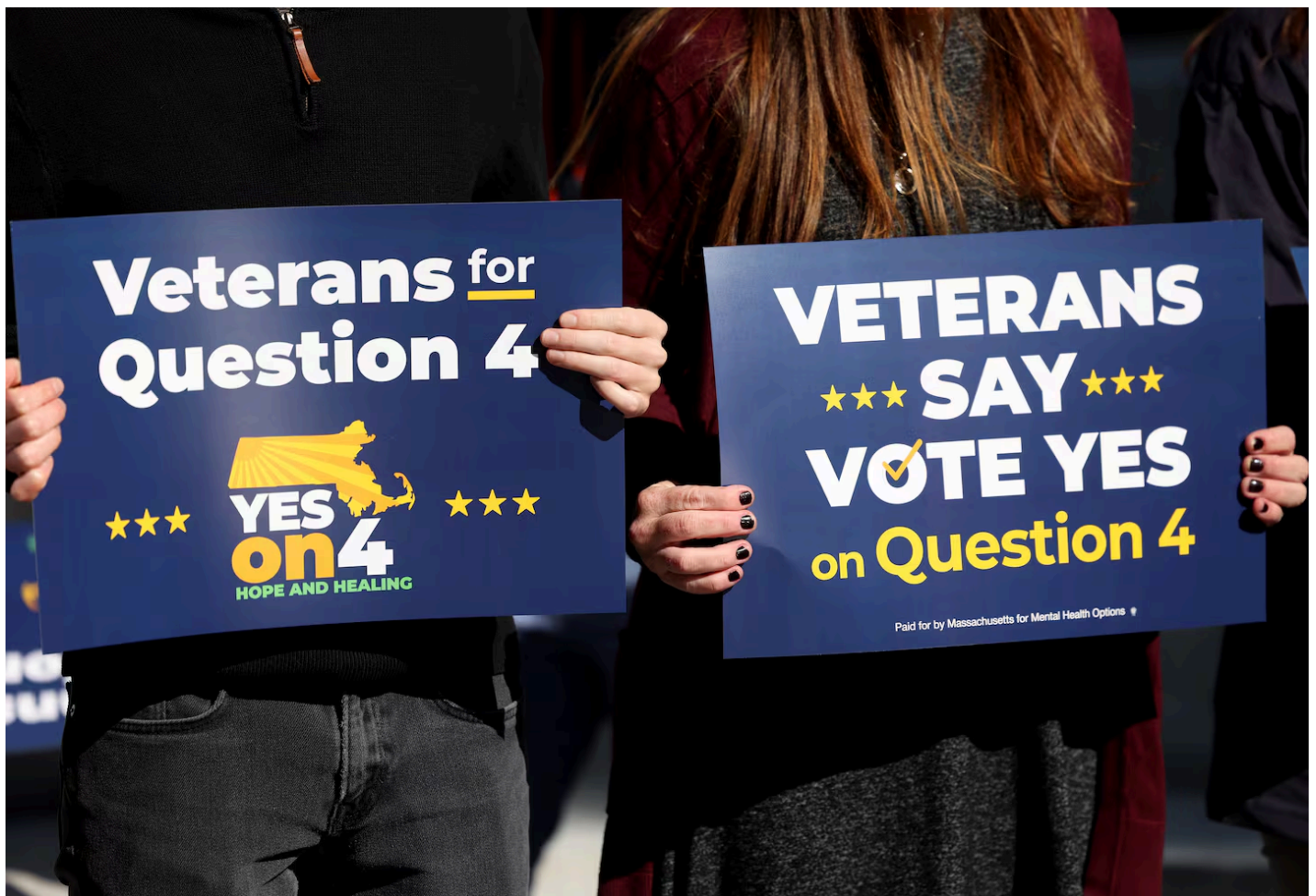


Mass. voters refused to legalize psychedelics. Then came the campaign infighting.

Two former campaign staffers have made complaints to state campaign finance regulators

By [Laura Crimaldi](#) Globe Staff, Updated July 21, 2025, 2 hours ago



Supporters held signs for the Yes on 4 ballot question during a press conference in October 2024 held by the "Yes on 4" group, Massachusetts for Mental Health Options, on Boston Common. JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF

The referendum committee behind the [unsuccessful 2024 ballot question](#) that sought to legalize psychedelics in Massachusetts has been accused by two former employees of violating campaign finance law.

In emails to state campaign finance regulators, Graham Moore, one of the former staffers, alleged the ballot question committee violated the law by failing to report spending by a New York nonprofit for television ads, outreach on college campuses, and \$16,000 in campaign bonuses for him and a colleague, Jamie Morey.

A campaign official said the committee followed all rules and accused the former staffers of misinterpreting the law. The leader of the New York nonprofit, Heroic Hearts Project, said the group consulted with legal experts to ensure it complied with the law.

The allegations put a spotlight on campaign finance laws for ballot question committees and nonprofit organizations.

Unlike rules for candidates, there are no limits on contributions to referendum committees and the groups don't have to disclose their financial activity as frequently.

In interviews, Moore and Morey said they felt a duty to inform regulators that their campaign bonuses were paid by Heroic Hearts Project and not publicly disclosed in political finance reports once they learned those payments may have violated the law.

They also said they hold Heroic Hearts Project in high esteem and accused the ballot question committee of manipulating the nonprofit. Their accusations [were first reported last month by Lucid News](#), which covers psychedelics.

“We basically ratted on ourselves because we didn't think it was right,” said Morey, a Marshfield resident who served as the campaign's community engagement director.

A spokesperson for the state Office of Campaign and Political Finance said it doesn't confirm complaints made with the agency. On June 27, Maura D. Cronin, deputy general

counsel at the agency, said in an email shared with the Globe that she was reviewing Moore's records.

The ballot committee, which closed in May, was known as Massachusetts for Mental Health Options or the Yes on 4 campaign, and reported raising more than [\\$7.7 million](#), plus more than \$1.2 million of in-kind contributions, state campaign finance officials said.

The group pushed a measure that would have created therapeutic centers for accessing psychedelic drugs and would have allowed unregulated consumption and home growing of some psychedelic substances.

Voters [rejected the proposal by a 14 percent margin](#). State lawmakers are now [considering bills](#) that would allow the use of some substances.

Danielle McCourt, chairperson of the ballot question committee, said she had no comment.

Another campaign official said in a statement that the committee properly disclosed its activities. The statement said that nonprofit groups "educated the public about psychedelics," and that such action is legal.

"There is a basic distinction between these activities under the law," said the official, Jared Moffat, former policy director for New Approach Advocacy Fund, a social welfare organization in Washington, D.C.

The fund shares a founder with the national political action committee, New Approach, which organized successful psychedelic legalization campaigns in Oregon and Colorado. The political action committee didn't respond to requests for comment.

In a statement, Jesse Gould, founder and president of Heroic Hearts Project said the organization wouldn't comment on the complaints, but is "committed to transparency and integrity in all of our activities."

The group pays for veterans with post traumatic stress disorder to travel to places where psychedelics are legal for treatment.

Under tax laws, nonprofits, which don't have to disclose their donors, can take [sides on ballot measures and publicize their message](#) as long as the spending doesn't exceed federal limits, which can be up to 20 percent of a group's annual spending.

If [nonprofits raise money to support or oppose a referendum initiative](#), state law requires they form a ballot question committee. There are also disclosure requirements for nonprofit spending on ballot committees.

Geoff Foster, executive director of Common Cause Massachusetts, a nonpartisan good government group, said an investigation is appropriate.

"These are serious allegations and they warrant an investigation by OCPF," he said.

Common Cause is backing legislation that would shed more light on campaign finance activity of ballot committees by requiring more frequent reporting.

State regulators have previously sanctioned nonprofits for inadequately disclosing their support for ballot questions.

In 2017, the nonprofit [Families for Excellent Schools-Advocacy](#), the single largest funder behind a failed ballot question to expand charter schools, agreed to reveal its donors and pay [\\$426,466](#), the biggest settlement ever negotiated by state campaign finance regulators.

In 2018, regulators sanctioned [Strong Economy for Growth](#) and forced it to reveal its donors for similar violations.

Moore's complaints also ask state regulators to scrutinize a Massachusetts organization, Open Circle Alliance, which educates the public about psychedelics. The ballot committee

helped to establish the organization in April 2024, and Emily Oneschuk, a ballot committee official, is the alliance's treasurer and a director, Moore's complaints said.

The committee didn't record any donations or payments involving Open Circle Alliance or Heroic Hearts Project, state campaign finance records show.

In an interview, Moore accused ballot committee leaders of using the groups to skirt campaign finance laws. He and Morey are involved with Mass Healing, a nonprofit formed this year that advocates for legal access to psychedelics for therapeutic reasons.

"The only way for the movement to win is for this mismanagement to be exposed so it doesn't happen in other states," said Moore, a Cambridge resident who has taken psychedelics to treat obsessive compulsive disorder.

Open Circle Alliance said in a statement that it operated independently from the campaign and did not receive funding from it or New Approach. Oneschuk "stepped back" from alliance activities last June to work on the campaign, said Stefanie Jones and Rebecca Slater, co-founders of the group.

Moore's complaints also allege the Heroic Hearts Project paid another nonprofit, Students for Sensible Drug Policy, to organize college students.

In an e-mail, Students for Sensible Drug Policy said it was reviewing the matter and wouldn't comment.

Moore's complaints also raised concerns about television ads.

The ballot question committee and Heroic Hearts Project paid for commercials, using the same agency to purchase time on local television, Federal Communication Commission records show.

Commission records reviewed by the Globe show the nonprofit paid \$317,603 for commercials on three local stations. The group said it looking into how much it spent.

Though the [nonprofit's](#) ad didn't mention the ballot question, a [Heroic Hearts Project news release](#) described the content of the spot as “the central component of Massachusetts Question 4 on November's ballot.”

Laura Crimaldi can be reached at laura.crimaldi@globe.com. Follow her [@lauracrimaldi](#).

[Show comments](#)
