

Written Testimony
In opposition to: SB 147, prohibiting Kratom
By: David C. Vaughn
(Resident, Harford County, Maryland)

Dear Senators & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to you to share my experience with Kratom and how it saved my life. In June of 1999 I underwent a below the knee amputation surgery stemming from a sports related injury. As a result of being prescribed narcotic pain medication following my surgery, I became dependent on Oxycodone and other narcotic pain medications. This dependency lasted 18 years. No matter what I did or how hard I tried I could not break free from this addiction. On 3/8/17 sitting in the break room at my job I picked up a newspaper and read a story that changed my life and saved it as well. The story I read was about several individuals that used Kratom and were able to put an end to a horrible addiction to narcotic pain killers. With nothing to lose I decided to give Kratom a chance.

It changed my life. I have been clean ever since. I'm going on 3 years with no prescription narcotic painkiller use and no relapses. I do not miss that fatal addiction. Being a below the knee amputee, I sometimes have pain. This may be for the rest of my life and it may not be. I do take comfort knowing I can take this herbal supplement without the severe risk of dependency. Not only has Kratom helped me, it has helped several military veterans I know with post war injuries. They claim this miracle herb saved their lives also.

Opioids are addictive. Opioids are deadly. Opioids can destroy your body and your mind. I support common sense regulation of Kratom, but if Kratom is banned in our state it will be devastating to thousands of survivors who might otherwise be victims of the opioid crisis. The legal age to purchase Kratom is 18. I feel 21 is more appropriate. I support warning labels on Kratom products about possible prescription drug interactions. Kratom should be sold online, at reputable licensed retailers. Kratom should be sold in sealed, warning labeled bottles.

There has been speculation on social media that Kratom is no different than narcotics. There is a huge difference. Kratom does not have the punishing withdrawal effects that opioid medications have. Kratom does not provide the mind altering side effect of "a false sense of well-being" that almost every opioid medication produces. This is why opioid medications are so addictive in a relatively short period of time. Sometimes only after three days of use. This opioid epidemic that is ravaging our great nation needs eradication. Too many lives have been lost. Banning Kratom, a non-opioid herbal supplement is not the answer.

Thank you so much for listening to my story. If you have any questions feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,
David Vaughn
Fallston, Maryland
Cell Phone (443) 903-4804