

HB0283

My name is Adam. I want to thank you all for giving me the opportunity to share my experience I have had using Kratom. I come from a life where using drugs was the only escape from reality. I started using opiates and drinking when I was 12. Today I am 28 years old and I'm coming up on 7 years clean. I have two sons full time, a fiancée, I own a home, 2 dogs, and I have a very good credit score. Obviously, I'm doing what I am supposed to be doing. I didn't use Kratom to get clean. If I did, it would have saved me a lot of time, wasted energy, and heartache. I did it without suboxone, methadone, medication. I just muscled through, because I knew I wanted a better life. But that doesn't mean I am not plagued with thoughts about using. It was always in the back of my mind, and eventually you get tricked into thinking it's the best choice. I knew I didn't want to get high, but I knew I couldn't stand these cravings any longer. After doing plenty of research. Real research. Sifting through the propaganda, peeling away the layers I discovered Kratom, and it has changed my life. I fear that if it wasn't for Kratom, I would be living outside again, and my family wouldn't have me around. Kratom is not a drug, and it is NOT dangerous. It is not a substitute; it is a supplement used to make the quality of my life better. I am not a criminal, but this bill would make me a criminal. Heroin is illegal and people haven't stopped doing that. People will not stop using kratom either. But the main difference is heroin kills. Kratom helps give people the lives they deserve, back. This bill will make regular people into potential felons. Doctors, lawyers, food industry workers, veterans, first responders. GOOD people. Kratom DOES NOT, I repeat DOES NOT come close to comparing to the feeling of opiate like effects. I am smart enough to stay away from anything that does. Representative. Nicholson, I read that you said, "from my perspective using kratom as a detox for getting off opioids really has no positive results." With all due respect, and I say this with the upmost humility, that is YOUR perspective. I am standing with a small group of people who represent a large group of people, that say from our perspective, it works. We have been through it firsthand. Firsthand experience from the inside looking out, not the outside looking in. Kratom does not cause people to nod out, does not include being itchy or scratchy. If that is the case than there is more to the story and something else is involved. Just because someone uses kratom as a supplement does not mean they are not in recovery. Maybe from an AA or NA standpoint. But that doesn't work for everyone. Its not what worked for me. We are all recovering and discovering every single day. Just because we found something that truly helps us, that not everybody understands, doesn't mean it's dangerous. Half the world is addicted to caffeine. Which can be toxic when taken as a medication. Rather than from food and beverages. Excedrin has caffeine in it and acetaminophen and Accounts for at least 56000 ER visits and 26000 hospitalizations every year. The national mortality files show around 458 deaths each year. I only point that out to show you on a grand scale how dangerous over the counter medications can be, compared to safe, pure, unadulterated kratom. In 2017 there were 1,985 overdose deaths involving opioids in Maryland alone. A rate of 32.2 deaths per 100,000 people. Which is twofold greater than the national rate of 14.6 deaths per 100,000 people. As of right now, and I'm not an expert, so I could be wrong, Maryland ranked top five for opioid related overdose death rates. With the largest increase attributed to cases involving synthetics like fentanyl. I read an article in the Washington post that stated preliminary data found that 2,114 people died from opiate related deaths In Maryland in 2018. I'm horrible at math but I want to say that's around a 5.2 percent increase. There's not a halfway house in this world, methadone clinic, or suboxone doctor that can fix that. Trust me, I have been to plenty. Help? Absolutely But now I ask, with all due respect, where are the good citizens of Maryland that have died from Kratom? Where are the deaths? At some point, we need to take this fight into our own hands and start creating real solutions. Solutions that are actually going to work, not cause more harm. I believe that the group behind me has found the final solution that has worked for them. This scheduling is only going to keep people trapped in that toxic cycle. Who benefits? Not me, not them, not their families, but the pharmaceutical companies, the treatment centers, and the state once people become incarcerated or on probation and parole because they are now criminals for consuming safe tea leaves. We are your constituents, and I know it is your job to worry about our best interest. Right now, we are telling you this plant is not dangerous. It is safe, and lifesaving. If it was a dangerous drug that we use to get high, we probably would be high somewhere. We for sure wouldn't be in the state building talking to you about this. If this is taken away from the people, more and more people will die, I guarantee that. Maryland will most likely remain top five. I beg you to please consider the Kratom Consumer Protection Act. Utah, Georgia, Arizona, and Oregon already have. Maryland is a great state, so let's be even greater and do it together. Please let us continue to heal naturally, safely, and continue being respectable members of society. Not criminals because we found a safe, natural solution, that happens to be part of the coffee family.