

House Bill 283

Criminal Law - Kratom – Prohibition

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My name is Michael Overstreet I have lived in both Baltimore and Perryville. My father, born and raised, and spent most of his life here.

Growing up I spent many New Years celebrating with family & friends in Perryville.

I know just how hard opiates have hit Maryland as a whole, Baltimore and specifically Cecil county.

While living in Perryville and before, I was heavily addicted to opiates.

I took time to come here today from Massachusetts because kratom means so much to me.

I recently got married, am a business owner and have a podcast, The Kratom Guy Show where we talk about kratom current events, science and things like natural recovery and plant assisted therapy.

My current life's work is to help others, to get kratom in the hands of as many people that need it and it's working. We are consuming kratom to enrich our lives, leading a happier, healthier life and have experienced few if any negative side effects.

I've had so many people tell me that kratom has only helped them get their lives back, and if taken away they fear going back to opiates and dying. Make no mistake about it, if you make kratom schedule I research will stop, people will die. Kratom is literally saving lives.

Dr. Jack Henningfield said that banning kratom would be like taking away a drowning person's life preserver, because it isn't coast guard approved.

I say it's worse than taking away a life preserver. I was once one of those people out to sea barely hanging on, addicted to suboxone for over 8 years, until I got a kratom life preserver.

Now I have come back and we have a recovery rescue ship. We are picking people up that are too barely hanging on and we are turning people's lives around.

It's not just taking away the life preserver, it's the FDA and the state smashing into us, capsizing our rescue ship with their tanker and now we're all overboard. When we reach up, gasping for air, looking up for help to throw us a lifeline, we get thrown an anchor instead.

I know Mr. Kerr and Nicholson have questions and opinions regarding kratom. That's ok, but we must deal in truth and science.

My recovery rescue ship is full of truth, honor, respect and courage. We can't judge others' recovery or morality and we certainly can't legislate it. The drug war has been an utter failure and you can not start another war on tea consumers.

To turn us all into felons and to mobilize paramilitary police task force units to carry out demands to violently attack peaceful people who have hurt no one, in their own homes for drinking tea is immoral and unjust.

I am not sure what recovery looks like to you, but what recovery looks like to me is addicts overcoming their addictions, obtaining jobs, promotions, vehicles and homes.

Taking care of our families, being present, alert & aware in ours and loved ones lives.

Being responsible, dependable, keeping our word. Reintegrating into our communities and helping each other overcome addiction.

I am here speaking out for a better life for myself and those around me. It's about picking each other up and doing the best we can.

If this doesn't look like recovery and positive results to you I am not sure what does.

Do not take away this lifeline, purposely capsizing our recovery ship and throw us weights saying they are life saving devices.