

Good afternoon. Thank you for allowing me to speak with you on behalf of kratom here today. My name is Christina Groat. I am a wife, mother of two young girls, an Army Vet, and a small business owner in Wichita, Ks.

I have now been taking kratom on and off for the last four years and can personally attest to its benefits.

I take kratom for chronic back and hand pain, as well as, a mild mood and energy boost. I also use St. Johns wart, plantain, dandelions, sage, mullein. The list goes on and on.

Before finding kratom, my doctor had me on several controlled substances that, over time, starting having negative effects on my liver and kidneys. I was starting to have kidney pain every single day. This was very concerning to me. I made an appointment with my doctor and started doing some of my own research on natural supplements that could help me, not only with my PTSD but my depression and pain as well. That is when I discovered kratom. I didn't find much research but what I did find were people it was helping. A lot of people. I found a trusted vendor, ordered some and decided to give it a try after speaking with my Doctor.

I voiced my concerns to her and she agreed. After years of being on these medications every day, it was time for us to try something else and I wanted to give kratom a try. She had fortunately heard of it and set me up on a plan to taper off of the medications to try and lessen the withdrawal effects. She agreed kratom could work and made me promise to continue my monthly appointments so she could monitor my progress. I did exactly as she instructed and, let me tell you, the withdrawal symptoms were like nothing I had ever experienced before.

I had extreme fatigue, muscle soreness, cramps, headaches, brain zaps, it felt like I could charge batteries in the palms of my hands, I couldn't sleep, and experienced extreme restless leg syndrome. This lasted about three weeks. It was close to torture at times.

It took five days and my kratom finally arrived. I had continued researching and was relieved to learn that kratom was well known for helping with withdrawal symptoms. I took just two capsules, about one gram of kratom for my first dose. Within the first thirty minutes of taking those capsules, I started to find some relief. I could tell the withdrawal symptoms were still there but they were no longer unbearable. I slept pretty well that night for the first time in two weeks and have been taking kratom ever since.

I have gone up to two weeks without taking kratom. The worst withdrawal I experienced was moodiness and mild headache. The same exact symptoms I have if I go a week without my coffee.

I have no idea where some people get the idea that you can possibly overdose on just kratom. It is not possible. It is also not possible to take so much kratom that you can, in any way, use it as a recreational anything. It helps with acute and chronic pain because it binds to the opioid receptor, yes. However, it is a completely different way than your pharmaceutical opioids and heroin. It works the same way that coffee and chocolate work.

I understand the intentions of the DEA and FDA. I understand it is their job and concern to keep us safe and healthy. That is what I and millions of others would like to believe. However, banning a plant that helps millions of people live to their fullest potential is not the answer. It would be one thing if they had

outstanding evidence to back up their claims that this plant alone, in its organic form, is dangerous. They would have numbers and horror stories to support their claims. They are simply not there.

Banning kratom would not only take hope away from many citizens that are finding safe and effective relief due to this plant, it would also leave them with a very difficult choice to make. They would be left with the options of either moving from Kansas to a state where it is legal, give them no other options than to go back to pharmaceuticals that they didn't find relief with in the first place, or make them criminals and force their hand into the underground market to buy potentially contaminated products that could cost them their lives. I am sure every single person in this room has heard how over crowded, underfunded and short staffed our jails are already. Do we really want to take the chance of making criminals out of perfectly law abiding, tax paying, citizens? I myself haven't had so much as a parking ticket. I have never been arrested. I have only had positive encounters with our police officers and I would really like to maintain my spotless record without my right to health and wellbeing being manipulated due to misinformation and misguided accusations.

People have been using kratom for centuries. Millions of people from all walks of life. Doctors, lawyers, teachers, parents, politicians, business owners, farmers, and soldiers. The list goes on and on. We are not talking about people smoking, injecting, or even attempting to abuse this plant. We are talking about full grown responsible adults who should have every right to choose to take a safe plant over a potentially dangerous pharmaceutical. Numbers do not lie.

So, now I am leaving my trust with you. I trust and believe that you will make the right decision. That each one of you will look at the facts, the science and twenty years of research proving kratom is in fact safe and beneficial to our health. I believe that you will take all of the information you have learned these past few weeks and help us. Help us maintain our right to choose a healthy and organic lifestyle. If kratom really is as dangerous as some claim, don't you think you would have heard of it long before this? Don't you believe the numbers and science would, without a doubt, prove that it really is dangerous? It simply isn't. The evidence is nowhere to be found. The danger does not lie with kratom. It lies with the dangerous drugs that have killed hundreds of people a day for the last twenty years.

Please, remove kratom from SB-282. Thank you for your time.