

Dear Members of the North Dakota Legislature,

Thank you for allowing me to add my voice to this very important issue. I am writing to you in support of HB 1628, and to ask that you please protect adult access to plain leaf kratom for individuals who take it as a safe, drug-free way to mitigate chronic pain.

I bring with me 12 years of positive lived experience with plain leaf kratom. I was mentioned in a recent Reuters news article, and last July, I personally had the privilege of being welcomed to the HHS press briefing stage by FDA Commissioner Makary, where I spoke about the benefits of plain leaf kratom and to distinguish it from the dangerous 7-OH (which is not kratom, though they are often conflated in the media).

On July 1, The DEA announced that it is banning 7-OH and other dangerous synthetics by placing them on Federal Schedule 1. Here is the link: [HHS, FDA Commend DEA Action Against Dangerous Enhanced 7-OH Products | HHS.gov](https://www.hhs.gov/fda/commend-dea-action-against-dangerous-enhanced-7-oh-products) Since the Federal ban is imminent, this means that there is no compelling reason to enact local bans, and especially not for plain leaf kratom as the federal government has identified the synthetics as the source of the problem.

This year, I attended the International kratom Science Symposium at the University of Florida for the second time, and was again able to discuss safe kratom use and benefits with leading scientists in person. Not one of the researchers or regulators called for a ban on plain leaf kratom.

For over 20 years, I lived with chronic pain from fibromyalgia, arthritis, sciatica, and other conditions. Before consuming kratom, I was often bedridden and required assistance, which affected my ability to participate fully in family life.

Twelve years ago, I began consuming plain-leaf kratom, and it gave me back my mobility and ability to fully engage with my family. In 2022, when my daughter and son-in-law's childcare closed unexpectedly, I provided full-time care for my granddaughter, saving them approximately \$50,000. This past summer, with major home repairs and high childcare costs, I again cared for my 3½-year-old granddaughter for four months, chasing her all over town — weekly trips to the zoo, the library, and every nearby splash pad.

I participate in local and state-level meetings on kratom regulation and spoke one-on-one with roughly 200 state legislators at the NCSL conference. In just a few weeks, I will return to Washington DC where I will again share my positive kratom story with federal regulators and legislators.

Outside of advocacy, I sing in a chorus, performing for nursing homes and assisted living facilities as a form of community service, helping bring joy and connection to others.

My personal experience demonstrates the profound impact kratom has on function, family life, and community engagement, and underscores the importance of consumer perspectives in informing science-based policy.

Please protect access to plain leaf kratom for adults using it to manage chronic pain as I have. I support the regulations in HB 1628, so long as the Attorney General is not permitted to impose an unilateral ban at some point in the future.

Bans and prohibitions invite a black market where bad actors are certain to adulterate their products with addictive and dangerous substances. Further, it criminalizes chronic pain sufferers—many from underserved groups--just for using a safe and effective natural herbal to help their condition. My number is 269 873-9592. More information and the science on kratom is found on my LinkedIn Profile:

https://www.linkedin.com/in/melody-woolf-366a7b146?utm_source=share&utm_campaign=share_via&utm_content=profile&utm_medium=ios_app

Best regards,

Melody Woolf