

Support for HB1628

Hi, my name is Jenni Olds, and I'm commenting today to show my support for HB1628. Plenty of states have passed Kratom Consumer Protection Act-type legislation to safeguard the public health of their constituents.

Let me tell you why I support this type of legislation. The core case for the KCPA rests on a regulate-not-ban framework, and there's real evidence behind it now:

Consumer safety without prohibition

- Mandates lab testing for contaminants (heavy metals, salmonella, adulterants), which addresses the actual documented harms — many kratom-related deaths trace back to contamination or dangerous adulterants, not the plant itself.
- Bans fully synthetic alkaloids and caps 7-OH concentration, targeting the specific compounds regulators are actually worried about while leaving natural whole-leaf kratom alone.
- Requires accurate labeling and age verification (21+), addressing the question of who is actually taking this and whether they know what's in it.

Evidence it works better than bans

- Rhode Island's reversal is the strongest data point available right now: advocates argued the ban pushed consumers to unregulated online and out-of-state vendors, increased exposure to adulterated products, and didn't reduce use — exactly the KCPA's founding argument, now tested by a real-world before-and-after.
- A cited 2024 analysis found that the state policy environment (ban vs. KCPA vs. no law) correlates with different usage and harm outcomes, giving the framework some empirical backing beyond anecdote.

Political and practical durability

- It gives legislators a middle path between "do nothing" and "Schedule I," which matters given how often full bans get introduced (Tennessee, Kansas, and Louisiana all banned in 2025–26) alongside repeal pushes against existing KCPAs (Georgia, South Carolina). A regulatory framework is easier to defend than an unregulated status quo when a ban bill shows up.
- It preserves adult access while giving regulators actual tools (labeling, testing, enforcement penalties) instead of just hoping people either don't use it or accept a black market.

My Personal Testimony

I have used unadulterated, whole-leaf kratom for over a decade to manage chronic pain from Crohn's disease and multiple sclerosis. It changed the course of my life. In the 1990s, I was one of many patients caught up in the overprescription of opioid medications. Over a fourteen-year period, I was prescribed more painkillers than a terminal cancer patient, yet I remained in debilitating pain.

Determined to break that cycle, I checked myself into detox. I was sick and tired of being sick and tired. Within seven days, I was off all pain medication, and I followed up with outpatient substance abuse therapy and Narcotics Anonymous support meetings. Six months into my sobriety, I developed post-acute withdrawal syndrome (PAWS). My pain returned tenfold, along with anxiety, depression, and low energy.

Looking for relief, I visited a local head shop intending to try marijuana for my pain. I explained my situation to the owner, and he introduced me to kratom. Before trying it, I researched it thoroughly, though far less information was available then than there is today. I ultimately decided to try the whole-leaf powder.

The results were remarkable. Within fifteen minutes of ingesting the leaf material, my pain subsided. It felt as though a weight had been lifted from me. From that day forward, I became a committed kratom advocate.

Closing

This plant has saved many lives and remains a valuable tool for chronic pain patients and others managing a range of conditions. Natural kratom does not impair users or create addiction. There is an important distinction between addiction and dependence. A person with high blood pressure who takes blood pressure medication to manage the condition is not addicted; they are dependent on a treatment that keeps them well. In the same way, many of us rely on this plant to manage chronic pain conditions.

I support a full ban on synthetic mitragynine derivatives while preserving access to natural, whole-leaf kratom. I ask that you take my testimony, and the testimony of others sharing similar experiences, into consideration. For many of us, this issue is a matter of life and death.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenni Olds