

Hello,

I am not a resident of North Dakota, but I care deeply about preventing unnecessary harm and suffering. To put it simply, criminalizing drugs has historically only increased the harm associated with that drug's use. Criminalization doesn't affect demand, it just relegates it to the black market, which is exponentially more dangerous than any legal market. Regulation is what limits harm, as it requires the sellers and purchasers to adhere to practices which reduce risks, such as quality testing, age restrictions, and education regarding healthy consumption. Think of alcohol now versus during prohibition when mobs were being enriched and consumers were unwittingly consuming methanol tainted booze. Clearly, our regulated model of alcohol consumption is far less harmful than the strict prohibition of the 18th amendment. This is a universal truth regarding drug policy.

Criminalizing more drugs does one thing, it increases the domain of authority of the police state while reducing the domain of freedoms enjoyed by citizens.

Looking specifically at mitragynine, which is the substance in question for today's hearing, it is clearly much less harmful than many legal practices in the state of North Dakota. It is less harmful than alcohol consumption, tobacco consumption, gun ownership, the operation of heavy machinery, etc. I implore you to spend half an hour on google scholar to familiarize yourself with the latest literature regarding kratom/mitragynine. It is remarkably well tolerated by human and non-human animals alike. Negative adverse events reported in relation to kratom are rare, and the majority of them are the result of a lack of education regarding what kratom/mitragynine can and cannot be combined with. This risk can be minimized, if not eliminated, with careful regulation and education. Criminalization will only increase these adverse events associated with contraindications.

Please, by all means, regulate mitragynine if you are legitimately concerned about the health and wellbeing of your constituents. Criminalization, as I have already explained, does not help your constituents, but puts them at greater risk of being harmed. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Best,
Soren Shade
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