

Hello,

I have been consuming Kratom since 2010. I've never had any health issues related to Kratom. I started taking Kratom to comfort me when I was dealing with a bulging disc in my back. I was diagnosed with degenerative disc disorder. I was prescribed opiates for pain, and Kratom has helped me to no longer rely on opiates. Kratom is a life saving natural botanical.

Kratom is the leaves of the tree *Mitragyna speciosa*. A tree native to Southeast Asia, particularly in countries like Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Papua New Guinea. This tropical evergreen tree belongs to the coffee family (Rubiaceae) and has been traditionally used for its stimulant and comforting effects. The leaves of the *Mitragyna speciosa* tree contain active compounds, primarily mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine.

The DEA has tried and failed to ban Kratom. The FDA has tried and failed to ban Kratom. The WHO declined to ban Kratom in 2021. Several states (who have politicians receiving money from pharmaceutical companies) have tried and failed to ban Kratom. Please don't fall for this spurious attempt to ban Kratom from someone who is probably in the pharmaceutical industry.

I've heard, and read many, many stories of folks addicted to hard-core opiates, get off of said opiates because they had Kratom as an option. Banning Kratom will cause more deaths from opiate overdoses. Please also consider the hundreds and thousands of Americans living in North Dakota that would be susceptible to legal trouble, and face jail time if you decide to ban Kratom. Many who use Kratom, like others use coffee, for energy and mood elevation.

Banning Kratom will:

- 1) Potentially produce more hard core drug addicts
- 2) Take away an individual right to consume a natural botanical. The leaves of a tree.
- 3) Cause unnecessary legal problems, for otherwise law-abiding residents.
- 4) Prevent law-abiding Virginia residents from accessing a natural botanical that can help folks with alcoholism, and issues with opiate dependency.
- 5) Make myself become a criminal as soon as the ban takes place. If I become a criminal for consuming Kratom, I will probably lose my job, and my family.

<https://kratom.org/guides/american-kratom-association/>