

Heidi Wittmayer

HB 1101 – Relating to the scheduling of mitragynine as a schedule I controlled substance.

1/12/2025

My name is Heidi Wittmayer and I have been safely using kratom (mitragynine) for about 8 years. I am opposed to the scheduling of mitragynine as it is far more beneficial than it is damaging for millions of people, including myself. I am a mother, wife, daughter, sister and employee. I am able to be efficient, available, present, alert, productive, and so much more thanks to kratom. I was diagnosed with ankylosing spondylitis and joint hypermobility in 2015 after having already been dealing with pain for many years. I spent more time in bed and sleeping due to pain and fatigue, which then led to feelings of guilt, anxiety and worthlessness because I couldn't be who I was supposed to be. I wasn't a very present mom or wife, I called in sick to work more than I liked, and I had a couple of ER visits due to the side effects of the opioids I was prescribed at that time. For pain management, I started with tramadol and Tylenol #3 to no relief and was eventually put on oxycodone/APAP 10/325mg. I entered into a pain management contract and was a compliant patient. This worked, but with side effects! After a couple of years, I found that I was needing more to get relief and had become physically and mentally dependent. This scared me as I am well aware of the respiratory effects and death associated with opioid use. During that time, I was also placed on a biologic medication (Humira) to treat the ankylosing spondylitis. This helped my pain and fatigue some, but I was already dependent on the opioids. I decided to research and find a safer alternative and that's when I found an all-natural, non-opioid plant from the coffee family, called kratom. It's not a cure and it doesn't get rid of all my complaints, but it helps. I have not experienced any serious issues or side effects. I have my blood tested 1-2 times a year because I'm on Humira and my labs have always come back good! On days I do not take kratom, I do not experience any major withdrawals, aside from tiredness/fatigue and increased pain (which I already had been experiencing before I started kratom). It's actually expected for someone to experience withdrawals when they have been consuming a product for a prolonged period of time, even when that product is an everyday staple like sugar, soda, caffeine, OTC pain reliever, etc., but there is no discussion on banning those.

I am in support of passing the Kratom Consumer Protection Act (KCPA). Many states, including Utah, Arizona, Oklahoma, Nevada, etc., have passed the KCPA. This act protects the consumer and requires manufacturers to follow CGMP regulations; restricts alteration of natural alkaloids; prohibits adulteration and contamination of products; requires proper labeling of contents of product; imposes age restrictions; and prohibits health claims not supported by clinical evidence. I purchase my kratom from an out of state vendor that has adopted the KCPA and I will only purchase from a vendor that follows the practices laid out in the KCPA. This vendor provides testing documentation for each batch of kratom that shows that the product I am receiving is pure kratom and has not been tampered with. This gives me peace of mind as I know I am getting a safe and quality product.

There is an abundance of scientific information on The American Kratom Association's website, I urge you to check it out and read up on some of the scientific studies that have been conducted

regarding mitragynine. There are many scientists that do not support the scheduling of mitragynine, stating that banning it could have very serious consequences (creation of an unregulated illicit market, turning to illicit substances that would increase overdoses and death) and that mitragynine should be considered part of the solution and not part of the problem in the fight against the drug epidemic. It could be another tool in the addiction tool belt, not an enemy to addiction treatment. Studies have shown that there is no sufficient scientific evidence that supports mitragynine-associated health risks that warrant scheduling. Even The Expert Committee on Drug Dependence for the U.N. Commission on Narcotic Drugs have shot down an international ban in 2021, also citing insufficient evidence.

Thank you so much for allowing me to present my testimony on an issue that is so very important to my life and to the people I interact with. I oppose the scheduling of mitragynine but recommend passing the Kratom Consumer Protection Act (KCPA) to create regulations that will build trust and safety in communities and for consumers whose lives have been made better or bearable by this plant. I urge you to vote against HB 1101. Thank you again, your thoughtful consideration is appreciated.

Heidi Wittmayer