

My name is Olivia Martin, and I am in opposition of this bill.

My mother is 53 years old and has SLE lupus among many other things that coincide with it. She was diagnosed in her early 30s when I was a child. I grew up with a mother that didn't have much energy to do the things she wished she could, but she did her best. As I grew older, her disease got worse and will get worse over time, as there is no cure.

I'm 26 years old now and this disease took a lot of things from me that a normal child would never think twice about. Now that I'm older - and I may have that same disease - I realize what my mother goes through every single day, and has, for the last 20+ years. It is without a doubt not something I would ever wish upon anyone. The pain that stems from deep inside your bones from the moment you wake up to the moment you go to sleep and comes with extreme exhaustion and a plethora of other things to tackle within that 24 hours is something you cannot just shrug off.

The lack of medication available to help the disease and the lack of education and funding to a cure makes any doctors hands tied with how to treat a patient like my mother and I. This leads them to do what they know best and prescribe pain medications to help you get by with just your day to day life. In acute pain patients this would not be an issue, but in someone like my mother who has that pain every day for the last 20+ years this becomes a problem. Opiates usually are what is slapped on the prescription pad.

This has been proven *and known* not to be adequate for chronic pain and can lead very quickly to addiction, among all the side effects that come with these medications. My mother, thankfully, did not become addicted but did lose hope and could not keep up with the side effects and judgement, even from healthcare providers, that came along with being on a long term opiate pain management program.

She found Kratom in 2016 for pain management with little to no side effects. After massively researching and finding good faith companies she gave it a try and has been on Kratom since. For the last 8 years, she has been able to manage her pain with a plant compared to the alternative. I would hate to see the outcome if Kratom would never have been an option for her. This plant allows her to get out of bed and have energy to get through her day. She can drive a car and go out in public and be there for her children and grandchildren. She can feel like a member of society even with a debilitating disease. She would *never* be able to do that with the alternative option which is opioids.

I haven't even been diagnosed with what I already know to be Lupus and doctors have already prescribed me opioids. I'm 26 years old and cannot be apart of society with that in my system. I can not get a job, I can not drive a car, and I can not leave my bed. With Kratom I can.

I ask you please do not pass this bill because of the loss I just endured early December. My uncle passed away from suicide and the drive behind it was an opioid addiction of 30 years. He was an outstanding man and father with great opportunity that was taken at the hands of opioids. He had a serious injury to his back from a job and was given opioids that would temporarily keep that pain away, but it was fueling a dependency. That dependency turned into an addiction that altered my family tremendously.

Thirty years ago Kratom wasn't an option, if it had been I would still have my uncle. If Kratom was given to him when he wanted to get off opioids, I would still have my uncle. Kratom is known not only to pain manage the same way opioids do, but to also guide and help people get through the withdrawal of them in a way that can *change their lives*. This plant gave me my mother back. It gave me the hope that people like my uncle don't have to suffer at the hands of

an addiction that was prescribed to them, and it gives me hope for what I may endure some day so I can still be a functioning part of society even with a debilitating disease.

At the same time as I ask that you do not pass this bill, I also ask that you adopt a bill to protect Kratom users like my mother. A bill that would hold vendors liable for any additives that are unnecessary or are in lack of regulation. I am aware of the bad name Kratom is getting from slightly altered and non-regulated manufacturers commonly sold in convenience stores around the country that portray a very different story from mine. These products harm consumers and tarnish the good that Kratom does. Having an adopted bill would force vendors and manufacturers to uphold regulations and stop them from adding any harmful additives to this plant, so that consumers, like my mother and many others, can safely use this plant to maintain a lifestyle that was stolen from them.

Thank you for your consideration and time.
Olivia Martin