

1/10/25

Dear North Dakota Legislators,

RE: OPPOSITION TO HB 1101

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB1101, which seeks to classify Kratom (mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine) as a Schedule I controlled substance.

First, the Eight Factor Analysis has not supported scheduling Kratom. Second, this natural plant has been used safely for centuries. Third, Kratom has life-saving benefits for millions of Americans, including myself. Banning a substance that benefits millions of people will lead to a black market and cause unnecessary deaths. What is needed is regulation to ensure quality products for adults in need. I urge you to regulate Kratom by passing the Kratom Consumer Protection Act.

Below is my personal testimony as an example of the hardship caused when a ban is implemented rather than reasonable regulations:

I am a Nurse Practitioner and Healthcare Executive who retired early due to disability. Despite struggling with many health issues throughout my life, I persevered through work and school, earning my doctorate in nursing in 2011. Unfortunately, by 2015, my health issues led to severe pain, an inability to stand for more than a few minutes, fatigue, frequent choking, and gait instability. After extensive research and many specialist visits, I was diagnosed with several rare congenital disorders, including:

- **Chiari Malformation:** The cerebellum in my brain was below the opening of my skull, placing pressure on my spinal cord and flattening my brain stem.
- **Tethered Spinal Cord:** Causes severe nerve pain in my trunk and legs.
- **Lipedema:** Causes swelling and pain in my legs and arms.
- **Ehlers-Danlos Hypermobility:** A connective tissue disorder that leads to instability of joints and chronic pain.
- **Hereditary Alpha Trypsinemia:** Makes me drug-sensitive and has led to osteoporosis and multiple spinal compression fractures.

For years, I was unable to find a tolerable and effective way to control my pain and fatigue. Even after brain surgery, I could only take the prescribed Oxycodone for a few days due to dizziness, confusion, and fatigue. I am so drug-sensitive that even Tylenol makes me sleepy, so I can only take it at bedtime. I took Aleve daily for three months, which was minimally helpful, but I had to discontinue it due to gastrointestinal side effects.

Luckily, my son introduced me to Kratom. I like to say that I gave him his life, but he gave me mine back! Kratom has been a miracle, reducing my pain enough to exercise and stretch, which prevents further debility and injuries from my chronic conditions. Most importantly, it has allowed me to enjoy our three grandchildren. Kratom has given me hope for the future. I am no longer a spectator in life but a participant. Kratom doesn't impair my thinking like narcotics, and I've never had side effects like all the other pharmaceuticals.

Regrettably, I only experience this comfort when I'm in Illinois because Kratom is banned in Wisconsin, where I have lived for 31 years. Due to the prohibition of Kratom in Wisconsin, I divide my time between Wisconsin and Illinois weekly. In Illinois, Kratom is legal and provides me with essential relief from the constant pain I endure. This necessity to travel imposes a significant physical, emotional, and financial burden, as I must maintain residences in two states. My husband's longstanding career in real estate and public service in Wisconsin prevents us from moving to Illinois. Yet, the legal constraints on Kratom mean we are too often separated.

This is also a hardship for my 91-year-old mother, who lives with me and endures the weekly travel between states. We won't be able to continue this weekly travel forever. The burden is not just mine, but it affects my loved ones as well.

God made the natural Kratom plant perfect. I ask you to help keep it safe and accessible for those in need by supporting the Kratom Consumer Protection Act.

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