

Hello! My name is Taylor Norman, and I am an Ohio resident, a full-time employee working over 50 hours per week, a husband, and a father. My wife is a stay-at-home mother who cares for our child full time, and I am the primary financial provider for our household.

Shortly after I turned 21, what began as casual, social drinking developed into a serious problem with alcohol. Over time, my drinking began to negatively impact nearly every area of my life. I struggled to maintain employment, friendships deteriorated, and my personal relationships suffered. I wanted to stop, but I found myself repeatedly unable to do so on my own.

Several years ago, I was introduced to natural kratom leaf. After beginning to use it responsibly, I noticed that my desire to drink began to fade. The cravings that once felt overwhelming became manageable, and eventually disappeared. For the first time in years, I felt like I had regained control over my life.

Today, I am proud to share that I have been sober from alcohol for over six years. I am able to work full time, provide for my family, and be present as both a husband and a father. Kratom has never caused me to feel intoxicated or impaired. Instead, it has supported my ability to remain productive, stable, and focused on my responsibilities at home and at work.

I support HB 587 because I believe in reasonable regulations that protect consumers through age restrictions, testing standards, and accurate labeling. At the same time, I am concerned that responsible consumers like myself may lose access to natural kratom leaf due to the actions of bad actors producing highly concentrated extracts or synthetic alkaloid products such as 7-hydroxymitragynine.

I am also worried that banning traditional kratom leaf could unintentionally turn ordinary, law-abiding individuals like myself into criminals overnight. I rely on natural kratom as a harm reduction tool to maintain my sobriety and stability. Losing legal access would place individuals in an impossible position — forced to either risk their recovery or risk becoming a felon simply for using a product that has helped them live productive, responsible lives.

Natural kratom leaf has played an important role in helping me maintain sobriety and support my family. I respectfully ask that any regulatory framework recognize the important differences between traditional kratom leaf products and these more concentrated or synthetic substances, so that individuals who rely on natural kratom for harm reduction are not unintentionally impacted.

Thank you for taking the time to read this!