Hello,

My name is Nathaniel and I just wanted to give a short testimony in support of S.B. 299. I'm a lifelong Ohio resident and I've had one heck of a ride in this experience called 'life'. I made terrible choices when I was in my early 20s, which led me down a long road full of extensive pain and inexplicable regret. Addiction was my number one enemy. It ruled my life for over a decade and that's not at all hyperbole. The only things that kept me from "checking out early" was my faith in Jesus Christ and having a few close family members who exemplified in one way or another, what it meant to have faith in Jesus. But the war I was fighting against myself seemed infinite.. It was like a constant grind and struggle all the while knowing that relief was impossible, or at least impractical unless I gave in to what would only destroy me in the end. But this is where kratom changed everything. The first time I ever tried kratom was a little over 10 years ago. It was a normal afternoon, not feeling well, anxious, restless, and my brain wouldn't stop invading my soul with unrelenting messages to figure out any way possible to think of a reasonable excuse to fail "just one more time". But for some reason this day was different, because it suddenly hit me.. I had bought a small bag of kratom leaves over a year before then because a friend told me it could help with withdrawals. I had forgotten about it though because the day I bought it I had tried a tiny bit and the taste was so freaking disgusting I instantly registered it in my mind as worthless and just stuffed it in the back of a drawer and forgot about it. But now I was desperate and I had an 8 hour work shift coming soon as well. So to try and counter the nauseating taste I made a peanut butter sandwich and spread the leaves on the other side of the bread and took a bite and .. it was still disgusting. But it was just tolerable enough to not puke! When my food had digested about an hour later, I was in disbelief at how much it helped, I was truly shocked. I could think again.. But the best part was that I WASN'T high either. It was a true 2nd chance. A completely all natural leaf saved my life and gave me back control to where I could fully function in everyday life and not be living in order to just get my next fix. I didn't ever feel the need to overdo it, and I didn't want to overdo it either and there's no negative side effects and so I think everyone who is in that unbearable darkness should have that same opportunity to truly get their lives' back if they want to. Now when it comes down to the other synthetic products that are being extracted and/or purified I have no issues with seeing those go. I've never tried any of them and I don't want to. I know what that kind of stuff leads to and honestly, it's very sad that it's so easily accessible. Thank you for allowing me to share my short testimony and I hope this helps in understanding why it'd be a terrible mistake to not protect all natural kratom leaf.

Sincerely,

Nathaniel