To whom it may concern:

I am writing to respectfully urge you to oppose banning kratom and instead SUPPORT SB 299. Placing kratom into Schedule I is a blunt approach that risks increasing harm by pushing adults toward unregulated markets.

States should take steps toward a safer path through age limits and labeling requirements. A more effective approach would be harm-reduction regulation, including:

- **21+ enforcement and retailer compliance**
- **Accurate labeling and ingredient disclosure**
- **Product testing for contaminants**
- **Manufacturing standards and enforcement against bad actors**

Please do not turn honest, proud and hard-working American citizens into criminals overnight. I urge officials to pursue a regulatory framework that protects public health without unintended consequences.

My name is Marc and I am a 40-year-old male. My experience with Kratom and its legality is the focus of this letter. I have been sober 8 years with help of Kratom and CBD.

I have had a long and treacherous battle with substance abuse. I have had multiple recurring bone tumors on the medial side of my tibia below my knee. The diagnosis and subsequent surgeries started at the age of 14. I have had six major surgeries on my right leg. Three of which were for tumor removal and the other three for MRSA treatment and debridement. My knee is completely damaged from the tumor destroying the top of my tibia and the MRSA completely eating away at my meniscus and cartilage. I have severe chronic and acute pain in that leg because of this. I am not a candidate for a knee replacement due to the bone being too damaged and not a stable site for the new artificial joint. I have also been in a severe car accident that lacerated my left arm, broke the fibula in my left leg, and tore the meniscus in my left knee.

The treatment of these ailments came with a lot of prescribed narcotic pain medications on a regular basis from age 14 on. My tolerance to these medications started to grow astronomically over 15 years and they stopped working effectively. I eventually was buying OxyContin on the street and abusing them heavily. This eventually led to IV heroin and cocaine use and the loss of anything of real value I had. I struggled with this crippling addiction for many years. I tried methadone, Suboxone, Vivitrol, complete abstinence and had NO significant success with any of them. Finally, I found that a strong 12 step recovery was what I needed, and it would work temporarily but the physical pain I suffer from would become too much and I would relapse on opiates. 8 years ago, I found kratom and decided to try it for pain relief. It helps me with pain, it helps me sleep, curbs craving, allows me to function and participate in activities of daily living without being in extreme pain. I do not have extreme tolerance building problems with kratom like I did with traditional opioids. The side effects are extremely minor and do not impair my judgment or ability to function.

I am up at 4:30 AM every day and at the gym by 4:45 cycling for an hour. I have lost weight in a healthy fashion due to my exercise and diet change that kratom has helped me make. I am much more positive about taking care of myself and am able to be present for life. My pain hasn’t completely vanished, but it is manageable due to kratom. I am the healthiest and happiest I have ever been in my entire life! My spiritual growth has been a big factor as well in my 8 years of sobriety along with kratom. I have found that these two things working in harmony have literally saved my life! I am a completely different person, and my family has their son back. I do not want to die and the fact that this harmless plant is being targeted makes me scared for my life. Let’s focus on alternative rehabilitation and recovery methods. Let’s focus on the fentanyl and other analogues specifically...NOT A NATURAL BOTANICAL! Please...let's take a step back here and look at the success stories and reanalyze things.

Making this plant illegal will immediately criminalize innocent Americans that will suffer if kratom is taken away. The war on drugs has been a failure and taking away such a helpful tool people use to avoid lethal prescription drugs and heroin/fentanyl will cause even more deaths. People have bad reactions to everything. The number of hospitalizations and deaths from acetaminophen is astronomically higher than deaths supposedly caused by kratom. People are almost always having issues from polysubstance use where kratom is not the only drug in their system.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I hope you show empathy for chronic pain and recovering addicts that use this plant. Let's work with the American Kratom Association on advocating for safe manufacturing practices to ensure adults have access to pure and unadulterated kratom products in the USA.

Sincerely,

Marc Perdue

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