Testimony in Support of Regulated Kratom Leaf

Agenda Item SB 299

March 21, 2026

Dear representative:

My name is Libby McMillen. I am an educator with a college degree and currently serve as an instructor at a community college in an economically disadvantaged region. My work contributes directly to workforce development, student advancement, and educational access in a community that depends on stable public institutions and dedicated faculty.

I am writing to share my personal experience with kratom leaf and to support reasonable regulation rather than prohibition.

I have used kratom leaf for over twenty years. During that time, I have experienced no negative health effects and my medical lab work shows no damage to my liver or other organs. I use traditional kratom leaf in moderate, consistent amounts, and have done so for over two decades without escalating my usage or abusing this substance.

Kratom allows me to remain functional despite chronic joint pain. It enables me to help students develop critical thinking and empower themselves. I perform the responsibilities of my profession without interruption, and enjoy the contributions I make to society. Without legal Kratom leaf I would likely need to pursue prescription opioid pain medications or take repeated time off work due to unmanaged pain.

A blanket ban on kratom leaf would cause direct harm to me and many others like me. My joint pain will not disappear if this plant is made illegal. Instead, I would be left with fewer safe and effective options to manage my condition. Removing legal access would likely force me to consider opioid medications or endure unmanaged pain that could limit my ability to continue teaching consistently.

Kratom has helped me avoid opioid medications entirely. At a time when opioid dependence and misuse have devastated communities nationwide, this fact matters. This plant has provided pain relief without impairing my cognitive function or my ability to perform in a professional academic setting.

I do not seek intoxication. I seek functionality as a contributing member of society.

Regulation of kratom is appropriate and responsible. Clear industry standards for manufacturing, testing, labeling, and age restrictions would protect consumers while preventing adulterated or high-potency products from entering the marketplace. Age limits similar to alcohol and tobacco laws would keep kratom out of the hands of minors.

What I do not support is a blanket ban that criminalizes responsible adult use of traditional kratom leaf. Such bans ignore the lived experience of long-term, stable users like myself who rely on it for daily functioning and professional contribution. A blanket ban will harm many people like me by removing access to a safe and natural plant that has been used in Southeast Asia to alleviate pain for agricultural workers and fishermen for hundreds of years.

As an educator, I understand the importance of evidence-based policy. Reasonable regulation strengthens safety. Prohibition without clear scientific justification or clinical studies removes a functional tool from responsible adults. Toxicology reports that have been mentioned recently are not scientific studies and do not replace dedicated clinical studies on Kratom. Further, an uninformed blanket ban may push consumers toward more dangerous alternatives such as opiates as I have mentioned before. A ban will not eliminate harm, it will cause it.

I respectfully urge policymakers to adopt balanced regulation that enhances product safety, establishes clear standards, and preserves legal access for responsible adult users.

Sincerely,

Libby McMillen