

Members of the committee,

I found someone to cover my shift and drove here from Wichita to request the removal of all Kratom language from senate bill 282. Missing a shift and stretching an already razor thin budget in order to address this committee today is a testament to how crucially important it is to prevent this bill from imposing a ban on Kratom. Before I discovered Kratom I was among the estimated 3 million Americans struggling with opioid addiction.

In 2008 I suffered a broken tibia and fibula requiring reconstructive surgery. For the duration of my recovery in the hospital an IV released a steady dose of powerful opioids to cope with the pain. Upon my release, I was sent home with a prescription for 10mg Hydrocodone. About a year later I was diagnosed with osteoarthritis and was prescribed a 50mg dose of Tramadol, to be taken four times a day. Five years later, an injury sustained on the job once again yielded a prescription for 10mg hydrocodone four doses daily and my Tramadol prescription was increased to six. Following six months of physical therapy and rehabilitation my knee recovered and my opioid regimen was normalized. Soon after, my primary care physician relocated. The doctor who replaced him was not comfortable prescribing tramadol and I was taken off the medication. It was then that I was introduced to the pain, insomnia, cold sweats, diarrhea, and vomiting of opiate withdrawal. In the throes of opiate withdrawals, legality and scheduling is absolutely meaningless. I was able to find pharmaceutical opioids on the street to fend off withdrawal symptoms.

Because of that I saw myself toeing the line between dependence and addiction and it scared me. After that I started to do research on combating opioid withdrawals and came across Kratom. For the next six months I dedicated quite a bit of time to research of the plant and the risks as well as the benefits of taking it. What I learned was the great potential to never have to take another narcotic for my daily pain as well as its ability to combat anxiety and depression. I started with the smallest recommended dose and increased it slightly until I found the dose that would ease the withdrawals and help with my anxiety issues. For the past year and a half I have been taking Kratom. I have not once had to increase my dose since I found the right amount for me to take. In the last year and a half I have not taken any prescription pain medication, except for a couple days after an oral procedure I had to have done. Neither have I suffered from an anxiety attack. To put that in prospective, between 2006 and 2016 I have had a total of 13 separate anxiety attacks that have required hospitalization. Ladies and gentleman of the committee I would like to at a time like this, where even lawmakers in Sedgwick county know how severe the opioid epidemic is in our country, why would we ban a plant that could save countless lives like it saved mine. In 2016 alone the opioid epidemic was responsible for over 42,000 deaths and 40 percent of those deaths were the result of prescription pain killers. The pharmaceutical companies such as Phizer, instead of taking responsibility for their actions in flooding the market with these deadly drugs and helping to find a way to combat the problem they helped create, have decided to take the approach of just filling their pockets with the money they get from putting hundreds of thousands of Americans in danger. These companies even plan

on people abusing their medication. They figure into their sales projections the abuse of the prescription pain medication because they have full knowledge of the harm they cause and love it because their bank accounts are loaded with all the blood money they can hope for. As I said before even lawmakers in Sedgwick county realize how horrible all this is and have filed a lawsuit against some of these companies for their criminally negligent actions. Ladies and gentleman, if an all-natural plant that has not been refined, altered or had anything added to it in any way has the ability to to save countless people from ending up in a morgue somewhere because they took too much of something given to them legally by a doctor, why would we get rid of it. When you take Kratom you face no risks of overdose. In conclusion what im asking you to do is to take a closer look at the research and data, and that you make the decision to help people and not make it harder for people like myself to free themselves from this opioid epidemic. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

George Roy Harper II