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To Clerk <Clerk@KCMO.org>

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From: Susan A. Cave, very concerned citizen and the mother of William Cave

Date: 9 Dec 2025

Dear Sirs and Ma'am's of this Finance, Governance and Public Safety Committee,

I never would have imagined that I would lose my 32-year-old son from raw leaf kratom, a substance sold in gas stations and smoke shops throughout the entire state of Missouri. The loss of my son has shaped the remainder of my days...and I am pretty old.

But less face it, millions of Americans take kratom and the kratom industry is estimated to be worth roughly 1.5 billion dollars. Many kratom consumers say kratom is an effective way to treat depression, pain and addiction. My son took kratom to self-treat his depression, reading that it was safe and "all natural." I thought it was safe too..at first!

After William discovered kratom, he became a chronic user and became dependent on it.... He kept having to up his dose to get the same desired effect. As time went on, he started feeling worse with his anxiety & depression. He tried many times to stop taking kratom after he realized he had become dependent and felt even worse than before. He tried to taper; He tried to stop cold turkey....MANYMANYTIMES He tried to stop and each time he failed. It was a vicious cycle. One time he experienced sever withdrawal symptoms ...that I witnessed. On April 20 2024, my son did not come home. Witnesses say he simply fell forward and did not get up. By the time they got to him, he was gone. Toxicology results showed my son died from a toxic mixture of kratom and his prescribed antidepressants.

During his struggle, William fought hard to stay active, to work, to raise his daughter and be a good husband. In spite of his struggles with kratom addiction William was never a non-productive non-functioning member of society.

Most people don't understand there is **NO** difference between natural kratom plant alkaloids and synthetic lab-made drugs like 7-OH. **Let's be clear about the facts:** There are over 50 alkaloids in the raw kratom leaf and still not a complete understanding of the two main ones—mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH). Every leaf is different depending where it is grown overseas, the environmental growing conditions, how it is harvested, how long it is cured, how long it is allowed to ferment and the manufacture's processing technique. Mitragynine found in the kratom leaf is

metabolized naturally inside the body into 7-hydroxymitragynine. Because of this fact, you cannot say 7-hydroxymitragynine is a completely different substance than raw ground -up kratom: they are one and the same.

Bad actors will always look to enter a market, find a product they can exploit, re-create it and synthesize it to become a product more addictive and deadly than ever before. Right now, on social media you can easily find links and websites with people giving step-by-step instructions on how to make 7-OH from raw kratom. Any regulation, no matter how strongly written, cannot stop the industry's manipulation of alkaloids, cannot stop overdoses, and cannot prevent more families from suffering the loss mine has endured. The public has no idea what they are really ingesting.

In reality, Kratom is a drug and a very deadly one at that. It is an addictive opioid-like drug and many thousands of families have experienced tremendous loss and heartbreak because of it. It is truly tragic to know something so readily available can create so much misery and heartbreak.

Any Kratom Consumer Protection Act (KCPA) or to ban **only** 7-OH and synthetics is a laughable solution and gives a false sense of security to the consumer. KCPA regulations that require testing, labeling, age limits, restrictions on mixing products and packaging standards are all unrealistic safeguards.

And I would like to ask: How can a person be a responsible kratom consumer when so much remains unknown about how to safely consume kratom and whether taking it could lead to long-term effects. Scientists haven't yet agreed on a fatal dosage for kratom or how kratom interacts with other drugs or how kratom may affect a person with a preexisting health condition. How long-term chronic kratom use affects people also remains unclear. There is no widely recognized diagnosis or treatment plan for "kratom use disorder."

Allowing the availability of kratom keeps the market-place door open for consumers to purchase future & novel synthetic derivatives like MIT 15 and MIT 16.

Most most kratom related deaths are caused by a fatal mixture of kratom and at least one other substance.

Kratom companies and lobbyists sell the plant as a safe way to escape opioid addiction, but people with a documented history of drug use accounted for the majority of kratom-only overdoses.

Between 2017 and May 2023, poison control centers across the country logged more than 5,200 calls reporting concerns about kratom.

Please prohibit the sale of Kratom and all substance made from raw leaf kratom by enacting a ban and/or by scheduling kratom as a class 1 drug. This the only effective and realistic way to keep way to prevent these products from reaching the public.

Thank you for allowing me to speak,,,,,SusanCave

