Susan Eppard (Michigan)

My name is Susan Eppard, and I'd like to thank Senator Grassley for meeting with us here today and his energy towards this cause to get rid of all of kratom.

My 22-year-old son Matthew died from natural botanical kratom leaf powder. According to his toxicology, he had no street drugs, no prescription drugs and no alcohol in his system. The autopsy showed he was perfectly healthy and should have lived out a full life. My heart, my family's whole hearts are breaking.

Matthew died in 2021, long before the semi-synthetics and synthetics hit the market. Our whole family has been devastated by this. It's been five years, and I now suffer from chronic anxiety and depression.

I have to live my whole life, trying to get rid of this drug that they're saying is completely safe.

Just because it's natural does not mean it's safe. It's still an opioid. Kratom leaf is an opioid, and it should be banned throughout the United States.

My son became very reclusive after using kratom for about a year, and I hadn't even known he was using it until he moved out of my house. He died about a year later.

Kratom caused him to have a seizure while he was playing cards with his friends, go into cardiac arrest and die right on his kitchen floor in front of his girlfriend, who is also completely devastated.

My son should have lived.