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**DATE**

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**DURATION**

37m 7s

**4 SPEAKERS**

Speaker Matt Hall (R)

Rep. Cam Cavitt (R)

Speaker 3

Reporter

**START OF TRANSCRIPT****[00:12:49] Speaker Matt Hall (R)**

All right. Well, it's good to be with everyone today. I know this is probably. You're pretty excited. We're doing 2 in 1 week. Uh, two press conferences in one week. So pretty exciting. Um, now, uh, I do have a tele town hall that I'm doing at 530, so I'm going to this night, we might not get the full press conference experience. So I want to apologize to the media. I know how much you like that. Um, but no, I just wanted to talk about today's legislative, um, calendar. It was very disappointing to see every Democrat vote against our bill to ban kratom. Uh, you guys probably know that eight other states have banned kratom completely, including Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Wisconsin, which we share borders with Rhode Island, Vermont and Connecticut. They banned it completely. We know that kratom is very deadly drug that can be found in all over the place. It can be found in the drugstores. It can be found all over. It's very addictive and it's killing a lot of people all over the country and here in Michigan. And so it's important that we ban the kratom, get it out of these liquor stores and drug stores and ensure that, uh, that our people are safe, our kids, but also, you know, many people, um, this is very similar to heroin and a lot of other opioids.

**[00:14:31] Speaker Matt Hall (R)**

And so just being able to get this on a, on the counter over at the liquor store is a very bad thing. And that's why we want to ban it, because we want to protect not just kids, but all kinds of people. I mean, we've heard stories of people who maybe they were struggling with an opioid addiction, and they started using kratom because they thought it was natural, and then they got hooked on it and died. And you can hear story after story about that. Um, it's a very sad thing. I'm proud that the Republican caucus came together, stood up to the lobbyists and and pushed that through over the line today into the Senate. So we're one step closer to banning kratom. Uh, getting this poison out of our state, uh, and protecting many lives. Um, and so I wanted to, uh, I have up here with me Patty Wheeler who, uh, whose son died from kratom, unfortunately. Very tragic. Uh, and she started a foundation called A Beautiful Life Stolen. So we're going to have her talk for a couple minutes. But first, I wanted our bill sponsor, who's been working very hard on this cam Cavitt just to talk about it for a few minutes. Great. Go ahead cam.

**[00:15:54] Rep. Cam Cavitt (R)**

Thank you. Speaker. Um, wow. You know, we got it across the finish line today. It's really disappointing that we didn't get a single Democratic vote today to help us with that. But you know, I started out on this when a constituent reached out who lost her son, Dakota, to kratom. She's a Sioux tribal member. And she started telling me about how this was done. So we looked into it and realized a large focus of this market is geared towards children. They market this towards children. It comes in candy. They make it in cotton candy flavors. They make powders to put into drinks. And what's funny is a lot of this comes from Southeast Asia and particularly China. And it's illegal in China. They don't let their citizens use it, but they import it over here. So I just don't feel that's that's proper. I think there's ulterior motives there. That's certainly. But our children are dying. The numbers aren't necessarily accurate now, but it's more corners are finding this happening. They're screening autopsies. And the more autopsies that they do, they're finding out that kratom was the cause of death. So, um, I'm proud to be able to sponsor this bill today. And, um, thank you all for being here. I'm going to let the speaker talk. Thank you.

**[00:17:05] Speaker Matt Hall (R)**

Great. Yeah. And so, Noah, we'll bring Patty up here. I know this was a very emotional day for Patty. She's gone all over the country and advocated in other states about the dangers of kratom. And it just happened. She was here today while we were moving this bill. And so I wanted her to have the opportunity to, uh, to give her thoughts on, um, on, on the bill today and, and the problem overall of kratom. So welcome, Patty, great to have you here.

**[00:17:36] Speaker 3**

Thank you. Speaker Hall. Um, wow, I this is a very emotional day for me. I never imagined myself to be an advocate. Um, in 2022, October, I lost my twin son, Wyatt to kratom and he was with his twin brother, um, when it happened. And my journey took me to produce a documentary. A film about kratom. And it is not a film to evoke outrage. It was a film to request attention. We needed transparency. We needed awareness, and we needed proper labeling. Michigan today did an unbelievable thing. I have been honored to be with Utah. Virginia, Connecticut now in Michigan supporting such a law, a ban. Um, this needed to happen. Everyone needed to take a pause. Real lives are being lost because of kratom. And no matter what is said about mixing kratom, if you take a Zyrtec and then you use kratom, you should not lose your life. Because of that, people deserve to know what they're putting in their body, and they need to know before it goes to market. We have a right for that information. We need not put lab coats on our gas station attendants and our vape store operators. That is not a position for them. So when you're using kratom for a medical reason, it should not be allowed to be sold in our stores. And I just thank you and I thank you for writing this bill. And again, I'm in shock. I did not expect to be here, but I am so grateful that I shared this and was able to feel the presence of Wyatt. I know that he is with this vote and it was very necessary. Thank you.

**[00:20:05] Speaker Matt Hall (R)**

Yeah. Of course. Are there any questions for us about the bill? Well, I got Patty up here. All right. Yeah. Go ahead. Beth.

**[00:20:15] Reporter**

So I haven't reviewed the bill, but this is an all out.

**[00:20:21] Speaker Matt Hall (R)**

Correct? Yes. It's an all out ban.

**[00:20:24] Reporter**

Is there any kind of future regulation of it, or is it just.

**[00:20:33] Speaker Matt Hall (R)**

Well, we're banning kratom. I think if you're now in the bill, we're banning kratom. You probably know that the FDA has found no legitimate use for kratom. No medical benefit for kratom. Um, the amendment we adopted today by Phil Green would open the door if there is, um, if there if the FDA does someday find some kind of benefit to kratom. Uh, then then to the extent that there is a medical use for, for kratom, then it would be allowed for that purpose. All synthetic kratom would be banned. All of the regular kratom would be banned unless there was a medical use that the FDA determined that there was a use. Now, right now there is none. The FDA does not find any use for kratom. Um, and in reality, I think it's being used. You know, they kind of market it as natural. But what we're finding and maybe Patty, you want to add to this. We're finding that it's very addictive, whether it's in the synthetic form or in the regular form. It's very addictive. And maybe you can talk more about that in a second. And that's why we're trying to ban it. And many people, they take it, they start taking it because they think it's natural, but they're not taking natural kratom. They're taking very bad kratom. Um, and so I know that some of the lobbyists up in Lansing, they try to argue there's good kratom and there's bad kratom.

**[00:22:07] Speaker Matt Hall (R)**

Uh, that's just a ridiculous argument that doesn't resonate in our districts. I mean, people all over Michigan are seeing, um, a lot of people, whether they're kids or adults, going in purchasing kratom. You can get it right on the counter at the liquor store or the gas station. I mean, I went down to Metro Detroit. Some of you reporters live in metro Detroit. I go to gas station in metro Detroit, and they built big signs. Big signs. They're like this big even in Grand Rapids. And they say, kratom, buy your kratom here. And you go there and it's very dangerous stuff and people take it there. There's no medical, um, guidance as they're taking it. And then they get killed because they're taking stuff that interacts with other drugs improperly. They're taking stuff that is highly dangerous opioid and they're dying. Um, this is one of the top things that I hear from our police chiefs across the state, and particularly in Southeast Michigan, that they're struggling with the kratom. It's getting into the schools, it's causing problems there. It's causing many deaths and illnesses across our state. And as cam noted, uh, many of the deaths it's creating are not even tracked because they register as other kind of deaths, not kratom deaths.

**[00:23:33] Speaker Matt Hall (R)**

It's my understanding that, um, some of the traditional tests can't don't necessarily detect this. So it seems like it's a much bigger problem. But if you talk to police chiefs and law enforcement, this is a growing problem. So I don't know if there's more you want to add Patty to that. Um, but for that reason we're outright banning it. Something that I mentioned eight other states do Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Wisconsin, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Connecticut outright ban it? Um, our outright ban would, uh, would be a little different in that if the FDA saw a useful purpose for it, uh, it could be, um, you know, prescribed for that purpose. Uh, but that's not the case right now. Um, and, uh, and we make it a misdemeanor, which you guys will have to. Maybe cam knows the details of that. Uh, for the use, uh, and or excuse me for the sale for the sale. So we're putting the punishment on the sellers. Um, that would also include people that import into the state online sales. Uh, we would create the punishment there for the sale of that. Um, so you can, you can clarify anything I said there. Is there anything you want to clarify on that?

**[00:24:55] Rep. Cam Cavitt (R)**

It's, I believe it's up to a year.

**[00:24:56] Speaker Matt Hall (R)**

Up to year. Yeah. Do you want to just talk a little more about the way that, uh, what kratom does and, and why, what we were.

**[00:25:06] Reporter**

Natural.

**[00:25:07] Speaker Matt Hall (R)**

Yeah.

**[00:25:09] Speaker 3**

So when you talk about kratom and the dangers of kratom, it isn't just that simple. It's also the addictiveness of kratom. So all kratom within about a two week period. Scientifically, they're showing that it is not if it is when you are going to become addicted. So is it our place to sell something in a store where we manage addiction? Because what if the people that walk in the store and pick kratom up for the first time and start using it recreationally, recreationally, and there's no label, there's no dosing, there's nothing in there to tell them how to use it. And what it doesn't tell you is that your body, no matter what you take and what form you take it in, is going to naturally metabolize itself as seven hydroxymitragynine. This is a proven alkaloid that is working in your opioid receptor of your brain, so you will become addicted to kratom. Having said that, again, I go back to is it our place to put something on a shelf that we know we're knowingly addicting people to that substance? And I think that Michigan moved today to push the pause button and actually leave it to the FDA to make that decision, which is where I feel personally it should be all along. It should be a federal ban or a federal question as to the FSC of kratom and what it should be used for. I sympathize, again, with people who may be losing something that they feel is very helpful in their pain management. But again, pain management does not belong in a gas station. And that's my feelings.

**[00:27:13] Speaker Matt Hall (R)**

Wow.

**[00:27:14] Rep. Cam Cavitt (R)**

Well said.

**[00:27:15] Speaker Matt Hall (R)**

Yeah. Um, any other questions?

**[00:27:21] Reporter**

Um, regarding the award yesterday, there was a lot of skepticism around town. When I spoke with was aware of his organization, he said.

**[00:27:34] Speaker Matt Hall (R)**

Yeah, well, I've received many awards and they're all there and you guys should take a picture because you don't cover any of the awards. The press. Now, they won't tell now. They won't even admit I'm the newsmaker of the year. The Crain's Newsmaker of the year. So I've won many awards. You guys know that. You never cover it. I'm very appreciative of the fact that this group of, uh, people who care a lot about accountability and transparency, uh, are notifying me that I'm receiving this award. So I'm very grateful to that. I know a lot of you in the press didn't want me to receive an award, so you're probably upset. Um, but, uh, you know, I wouldn't take away from the other organizations that are giving awards, and I think you should cover all the awards we get. I think there and I'm grateful for all of them. So any other questions?

**[00:28:31] Reporter**

So it's real or is it fake?

**[00:28:31] Speaker Matt Hall (R)**

Well, of course it's real. I mean, just like we get contacted by organizations, they contact me. Um, and we, uh, we're grateful. I mean, you guys know, I am the leader in ethics, accountability, and transparency. I mean, I authored the law heat, the Hall ethics, accountability and transparency plan. I just wish that, you know, every week we come up here, we win awards. And I wish you guys would cover them, but you don't. Um, and I'm, I'm appreciative that this one is receiving so much attention, but, you know, they reached out to us, we received the award or we got the notification.

**[00:29:08] Speaker Matt Hall (R)**

I read it to you guys up here. I stood up here and read the letter and I'm looking forward to receiving it from him. Um, and, uh, you know, I don't, I just, I know a lot of you guys are part of the Michigan Press Association, which, uh, uh, doesn't want me to receive an award. Um, and maybe, maybe that's what's driving this. I don't know. Uh, but I do think that, um, you know, when we receive the award, we'll bring it. And when we address the group, I'll be sure to share with them my appreciation for the fact that, uh, that they picked me, but I understand why they picked me. I mean, heat, right? I mean, we're putting budget transparency in place, something that is a lot of you wrote about the need for, but won't give me the credit when I got it done. So I don't know. I wish you guys had more things to cover, like all the the other awards I received, but hopefully you at least cover, um, what the organization said, which is that I've led the way on ethics, accountability and transparency. So anything else on kratom? Because I've got my tele townhall.

**[00:30:22] Reporter**

I think I have a question about it. You said it was coming out against this bill, which is.

**[00:30:28] Speaker Matt Hall (R)**

Well, the lobbyists, you know, you'd be surprised. These different kratom groups have lobbyists and the lobbyists. Um, you know, they're registered, but, uh, it's an amazing thing. Uh, there's some people that make a lot of money off of kratom, uh, poisoning our kids. And, um, one of the reasons why I think the right way to go is to ban it, uh, is because what these different kratom groups are doing is they're all right. They're saying that if you, you ban some of the bad kratom and then you create a regulatory structure to legitimize kratom. All right. And where there's a disagreement is, I don't think we should legitimize kratom. There is no FDA approved benefit to kratom. Um, you hear these anecdotal things, but you also heard Patty talk about how, uh, um, this is very addictive, even when you get it in the leaf form. So as long as there is no actual benefit to kratom, I don't see why we shouldn't ban it. And that's why we're banning it rather than, than rather than legitimizing it through a regulatory structure that legitimizes it. And then and then gives people this, um, I don't know, this, this belief that the government endorses it and it's okay to take kratom and there's benefits. That's why we want to just ban it completely and join these other states. Yeah. Agate.

**[00:32:05] Reporter**

Closed their eyes.

**[00:32:09] Speaker Matt Hall (R)**

Now what'd you say? Anything you guys want to say, I can answer. Um, yeah. I think the people opposing it are the ones that make the kratom or the ones that sell the kratom. And, uh, I understand you make a lot of money selling kratom, but as Patty said, it's addictive whether you no matter what kind you get, whether it's the synthetic, highly concentrated kind or the other kind. And I'll just point out, you remember we went through this with the bath salts and we went through this with the, um what did they call that? The synthetic marijuana.

**[00:32:48] Reporter**

Spice.

**[00:32:49] Speaker Matt Hall (R)**

Yeah. You remember that. So the synthetic marijuana, you ban one, one kind of it. And then as soon as you ban it, they create another another kind of it, you know, and they keep creating other kinds of it. Um, and so you've got that issue on the synthetic side. And then again, when we looked at the, the non synthetic side, we were trying to figure out, is there any actual legitimate benefit or use for this? And we can't find any. And in fact, it's very addictive. And actually, um, I know Patty, you know, of cases where the, the, the natural leaf kratom kills people. Uh, and you've talked to people who've had kids that lost through the natural kratom as well. So yeah, so, uh, so you know what I mean? So again, this is one of those things where you come up here, people pay high powered lobbyists to make arguments that don't make sense. And I think that the Democrats, um, made a mistake today, uh, because again, the right thing to do is to ban the kratom, uh, get this off the streets. And if the FDA finds a use for it, then it'll be regulated and legal for that use. But that has not happened. Yeah. Go ahead, Kim, I'm going to I'm going to have to go to my Teletubby.

**[00:34:06] Rep. Cam Cavitt (R)**

To answer your question. There's a certain smoke shop in this state that has 300 300 locations and they stand to make millions off. They make millions off the sale of kratom, and they're behind a lot of the lobbying efforts.

**[00:34:20] Reporter**

So I.

**[00:34:22] Speaker 3**

I do want to add one more thing too, because, um, I think that was something that struck me is staggering when I was producing the film. Um, again, that film is looking for a streamer right now. So I am open to showing it to legislators in the fall. I will be starting a college tour because just imagine all the 18 year old's freshmen that are going to college and they're looking to party. They're not old enough to drink, and they're looking for a supplement, and they're going to walk into a gas station and potentially purchase kratom, not knowing how addictive it is or hearing that it is, but thinking that maybe it isn't, you know? Um, but a number that is pretty staggering is that in 2022. At the time of Wyatt's death, there was an estimated 1.8 million users at the close of 25. When the movie completed, there were 28 million. Do we have the luxury of waiting another three years before we actually do something to wake up the conversation again? This move today is a very powerful move to create better conversation. If not in Michigan, in other states, as well as Michigan and other states as well. We need to open up honest conversation that does involve proper labeling and informed consent and awareness. Those are issues that should be in place before you put a product on the shelf again. Is there anything else that I can answer. I'm open to this. I was completely unprepared. I had no idea that I was going to be doing this today, and I was really emotional on the floor. I, I just wanted to say over and over again that this was not a political issue. It is not. It is a bipartisan issue. This topic should have been open to every Democrat that was voting, every Republican that was voting. My heart just stopped when I saw every Democrat vote. No, I did not understand that. I really did not because it is not a political issue.

**[00:36:47] Rep. Cam Cavitt (R)**

Thank you.

**[00:36:49] Reporter**

Thank you.

**[00:36:49] Rep. Cam Cavitt (R)**

Anything protecting our kids shouldn't be a partizan issue. And I think that's everything for today. So thank you everyone for covering this issue. I appreciate that. Thank you, thank you.

**[00:37:02] Reporter**

Thank you.

**END OF TRANSCRIPT**



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