**KRATOM LOBBY 101 GUIDE**

Meeting with an elected official, or their staff, is an opportunity to make the issues we care about come to life for key decision-makers. Often, legislators rely on the media, industry lobbyists, or their own research to make decisions, so your in-person meeting is a way to add personal observations, experiences, and successes to their decision-making process. The goal is to influence the way they perceive Kratom and those who benefit from it. With that in mind, it’s important to think of yourself as an “ambassador” for Kratom and your job to put your best foot forward with facts, research, and a professional demeanor. Below is advice on how to have a successful meeting. Remember – nothing is as powerful as your story, and the pro-Kratom movement is grateful that you’re willing to tell it.

**Personal Presentation, Attitude & Etiquette:**

* Always dress professionally. (No jeans, shorts, tank tops, flip flops, ball caps, etc…)
* If you have what would be considered *offensive* tattoos (or piercings), it is best to have them covered. While tattoos are more and more acceptable, if you can easily cover them up, it’s best to do so.
* Have a pleasant and positive attitude (make sure you get a good night’s sleep).
* You will most likely only have a few minutes to speak so be prepared to use the time as described.
* Do not lose your temper, become belligerent or insult anyone in the meeting no matter how much you may disagree. You may respectfully agree to disagree and ask to send more info in support of why you disagree.
* When finished, always say “Thank You for your time”
* Never apologize or taking their time, it’s their job
* Never say or complete this sentence “As a taxpayer…..”
* Always use the correct title: Representative or Senator [insert name]. Not Mr. or Mrs.

**Be Prepared:** Have everything ready before event

* Have a small packet put together to hand out to staff and key officials, so 3-4 copies

Packet should contain no more than 3-4 ITEMS (the less paper, the more likely it will be read) such as;

* 1 color copy of a picture of the Kratom leaf
* 1 reputable article/study in favor of Kratom 1-2 page MAX
* 1 Personal or family testimony. 1 page MAX. Include your name, age, occupation and contact information for follow up. Practice your testimony before the meeting.

**The Meeting & Speaking 101**

* Make direct eye contact with whom you are speaking. If you are one that has trouble with eye contact try this trick: look the person in the face and focus your eyes to his/her forehead at the point between their eyes just above the bridge of the nose.
* It is ok to present yourself with elevated excitement however, be careful as to not come across as desperate or fidgety. Remind yourself you are there to ultimately inform and tell a story to help form an opinion
* There will be times that your own patience will be tried. It is very important that you do not lose your composer. Also take note of your body stance if you become aggravated and tense your muscles or clench your jaw. The individual you are facing will stop listening. It will negate everything you are trying to accomplish.
* Your message to the staff member, Representative or Senator must be short. Think about what you want to say and make your pitch.

**5 things you will need to accomplish:** (lobbying for a specific bill but also in general, minus the bill info below.):

1. Personal introduction including “your credentials” i.e. “Hi my name is Jane Jones from Montgomery Alabama. I am a mom of 2 boys, active booster member at the High school, and I’m a secretary for a dental office.”
2. If there for a bill, state the bill you would like to discuss and know the status of it, i.e “ I would like to talk to you about House Bill #\_\_\_ that is currently coming up for a vote in your committee on Wednesday” (fill in bill history if needed). If not there for a specific bill, move to what Kratom is and your testimony and say you oppose any bill or maneuver that bans the plant.
3. State your stance on the bill i.e “This bill is very much a concern to me and I oppose the consequences that House Bill #\_\_\_ will create if passed.”
4. Give a brief description of the kratom plant and its benefits. Just because the individual may recognize the bill number does not mean they know what kratom actually is. i.e. The kratom leaf comes from a tree in the coffee family and grows in South East Asia. It has been taken for hundreds of years as a traditional remedy for….[insert your preferences, avoid any comparisons to drugs].
5. Give your testimony\*

Ask if there are any questions and give a sincere thank you at the end of the meeting. Send a follow-up email thanking them again and addressing anything you were unable to because you didn’t know the answer, or didn’t have the time for.

**Language Guide and Difficult Questions with Responses\***

| **Don’t Say** | **Try Instead** |
| --- | --- |
| Use (user) | Consume, consumer |
| Withdrawal/dependent | Stopping long-term daily use can cause discomfort along the lines of a person skipping their daily cup of coffee |
| Euphoric/intoxicated/high | Focused, calm, general sense of well-being |
| Drug/substance | Plant, natural |
| Opioid, K2, Spice, Heroin, etc. | (Avoid comparisons, even if you are trying to say that they are not alike) |
|  |  |

| **Question** | **Response** |
| --- | --- |
| Shouldn’t Kratom be prescribed by a doctor? | No — it functions as a botanical like it’s cousin coffee, with mild effects when used moderately. |
| Hasn’t Kratom been linked to numerous deaths? | The “deaths” that have been linked to Kratom are all tenuous — the people all either had a complications from other medical issues or other substances in their system, or some died of another cause (a gunshot wound in one case), but tested positive for Kratom. |
| There have been several hundred calls to poison control about Kratom over a 6-year period — isn’t it dangerous? | To put that in perspective, poison control receives 3-4 million calls per year, making the number of calls an incredibly small percentage. |
| Isn’t Kratom highly addictive? | No — with heavy daily use, one might become mildly dependent, just as someone may feel they need their daily cup of coffee. |
| Isn’t Kratom an opioid? | No. Drugs like heroin, oxycodone, and other “classic” opioids are full opioid agonists, meaning they fully bind to and activate the brain’s receptors. Kratom is a partial agonist, producing milder effects with low abuse potential. Evidence suggests that Kratom does not cause respiratory depression, which is the cause of death in opioid overdoses. |
| Isn’t Kratom a synthetic drug? | No, Kratom is a natural product made from the leaves of the Kratom tree. I’m committed to buying from the many companies that provide the safest product possible, testing batches and only producing unadulterated, natural Kratom products. |