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Senate Substitute H.R. 6 and the Opioid Minibus Legislation: The U.S. Senate plans to vote on the Senate Substitute version of H.R. 6 by the end of this week, if not sooner. The good news is that SITSA is not in the bill and, by agreement, the bill will not be amended with any language similar to SITSA. The SITSA provisions will be the subject of future action by the Senate later this year where a full Hearing is expected.

As other kratom advocacy organizations have reported, this is a major achievement for the kratom community because despite the strong push from the House of

Representatives to get this package of nearly 60 bills consolidated into a single measure and passed as quickly as possible, SITSA is not included in the Senate Substitute H.R. 6.

The American Kratom Association (AKA) has been hesitant to claim complete victory simply because we wanted to be prepared to act if needed. We share the optimism of the other groups who are working in collaboration on that significant progress that has been made in getting SITSA out of the Senate Substitute H.R. 6. However, more work needs to be done, and the battle is only over when the final vote is taken.

We have not, however, been as successful in amending the language of The SCREEN Act that contains broad language that will potentially impact kratom. Given the current Import Ban on kratom issued by the FDA, a ban we all know is completely unjustified, members of the Senate prefer to engage this discussion only if the Postal Service overreaches in their regulatory authority. We are building a regulatory and legislative record that will provide future guidance.

It has been my personal experience that claiming victory too early can create confusion and possibly allow people to let their guard down. I have advised the AKA team to stay focused on the ongoing discussions about the opioid package and be ready to react if we see a dangerous amendment surface. This is not a criticism of others, but only a different and more cautious approach.

We have used the discussion on SCREEN to bolster our scientific arguments and presentations of the science that shows kratom is not dangerously addictive nor does the natural plant present any public safety risk. This has been particularly important in explaining to staff and members of Congress about the current war on kratom being waged by the FDA, and to demonstrate with the science the mistakes the FDA are making.

Everyone should read the report by Dr. Jane Babin entitled "*FDA Fails to Follow the Science on Kratom*" at <https://www.americankratom.org/fda-fails> because staffers on Capitol Hill are reading it and seeing the bias being shown by the FDA. This report is a definitive guide to how a rogue regulatory agency can and does

abuse their discretion when they decide to unleash their vast powers against a botanical that is being safely used by nearly 5 million kratom consumers in the United States. Share this report with any local public policy person you can.

The AKA will continue to fight for the freedom of American consumers to make their own informed decisions to safely use kratom, and to educate policy makers on the unfair attacks being launched by the FDA on kratom's safety and addiction potential.

State Pharmacy Boards are a new FDA battleground to ban kratom:

The AKA sent me to meet with the Ohio Board of Pharmacy and the Arizona Board of Pharmacy over the last week, and it is clear both of these state boards were reacting to the FDA's propaganda against kratom. It is equally clear the FDA is opening a new line of attack to convince state regulatory bodies to ban kratom because the DEA has, thus far, refused to be the FDA's enabler in banning kratom from consumers.

In both cases, it was local kratom warriors who alerted us to the proposed regulatory bans on kratom. We thank you for your diligence and warnings to the AKA team.

The science and data that document the safe use of kratom is overwhelming, and we are doing all that we can to educate these policy makers on the real science on kratom.

Please stay alert for any word of such regulatory bans in your area and please alert the AKA as soon as you can.