

Senate Bill 0464

Bill Title Criminal Law – Fentanyl and Fentanyl Analogues Penalty

Committees - Judicial Proceedings

Date March 7 2023 at 1:00pm

Position In Favor

Hello, my name is Debbie Santini and I am in favor of this Senate Bill #464 to increase incarceration time.

My son Jesse Byrd died of fentanyl poisoning on February 16th 2022 in Stella Recovery house here in Annapolis. 5 days after he entered Stella House and less than a month from his 27th birthday.

My son was in a car accident on December 21st 2011. He was taken to Shock Trauma and had emergency surgery for his injuries. He was given opioids after surgery. At no time during my son's hospital stay did any doctor or nurse ever say to me- Mom, this is what we're giving your child for pain; it's highly addictive and these are the signs you need to be aware of. I was not aware of the dangers of opioids at that time or fentanyl. I am now.

These are not your stereotypical street corner drug addicts dying that we are talking about here. We are ALL vulnerable to this drug! Babies are dying from it! Illicit Fentanyl is in every drug out there now. This is murder plain and simple. I believe fentanyl deaths need to be looked at as drug induced homicides and investigated as a crime. Fentanyl is a Weapon of Mass Destruction and should be declared as such! And with our open borders we will continue to bury more children and leave countless families devastated!

My child did not want to die! He was happy! He was looking forward to getting his life back on track. He even made a list of priorities he wanted to

work on but wasn't given the opportunity to accomplish because of fentanyl.

Jesse was a loving, precious young man with a beautiful smile. He is missed every single day by all those who love him. He saved the lives of 4 people that I'm aware of by using Narcan, including his brother's life. But no one saved him.

Fentanyl is game changer. It's changed my life and that of my family's forever. It killed my child!

In my former job I supported families like mine who had loved ones struggling with addiction. I now devote all my time to honoring my son's memory and helping to promote awareness not only of the dangers of fentanyl, but to advocate on much needed changes in how recovery houses are allowed to be run in the state of Maryland and letting families know they have a voice.

I believe fentanyl traffickers need to be put away for a lot longer but increasing the term of imprisonment from 10 to 20 years is start. It won't bring my child back to me but it may just save one of yours.

Thank you,

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