



**IN SUPPORT OF HB1245 – DISTRIBUTION OF HEROIN OR FENTANYL CAUSING SERIOUS  
BODILY INJURY OR DEATH (VICTORIA AND SCOTTIE’S LAW)**

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

My name is April Babcock, I lost my son Austen on January 26, 2019 to illicit fentanyl poisoning. My son will always be forever 25, his life was cut short because a drug dealer sold my son something that he did not even know he was buying, he was buying cocaine but received a deadly poison in the cocaine, fentanyl. When anyone disguises a harmful substance in anything for another person to consume without their knowledge and it causes death or harm that is the very definition of a poisoning. Even those who are seeking to buy illicit fentanyl that still does not imply there is a safe dose to take. Illicit fentanyl has no safe dose to consume, this is not the same as pharmaceutical fentanyl, illicit fentanyl is being made in the jungles of Mexico in 5-gallon drums by drug cartels or drug dealers here in their basements and there is absolutely no quality control like the fentanyl used for surgery or given for extreme pain patients here in

America. Overdose means there is a safe dose to take, you take too much of that safe dose and it causes death or harm. There is NO safe dose of illicit drugs and dealing illicit drugs is illegal so my question to you is WHY ARE DRUG DEALERS GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER? My son paid the ultimate price with his life and dealers get to continue to walk the streets harming and killing Marylanders. Baltimore has the highest death toll in the nation per capita, this is disturbing and sickening. In a 12-month period ending in June of 2023, 183.2 deaths occurred per 100,000 people more than double the second in the nation which is Philadelphia and 87% of the deaths were attributed to illicit fentanyl. It is imperative that we get the dealers off our streets so people that do suffer with a substance abuse disorder have a chance of recovery and those that are first time, experimental and occasions users do not die. Our youth especially should have a chance to learn from mistakes and not die from them. This is poison, and its being cut into street drugs and fake pills are being made to mimic a real pharmaceutical grade pill and no one can tell the difference. DEA now has stated that 7 out of every 10 pills contain a potential lethal dose of illicit fentanyl.

Accountability is key. Less than 4 months after my son was murdered his dealer who sold him fentanyl but told him it was cocaine was arrested and charged with Felony Drug Crimes for possession of 11.47 grams of Marijuana, 36.34 grams of cocaine, 5.57 grams of cocaine and fentanyl, and 2.22 grams of heroin and fentanyl. All these drugs were packed for street sales. This guy was in possession of the same mixture that he had just killed my son with, and 5 grams of illicit fentanyl has the potential to kill 500 people. Zero regret for my son's loss of life! Now we fast forward to September of 2019, another 4 months after this he himself became a

murder victim in the Eastern District of Baltimore. He was shot to death. If this person was in jail where he belonged, I do not even understand why he was let out of jail but he was....if he were behind bars where he belonged he himself had an opportunity to change his life. Without consequences there is zero reason to change, the government failed my son because we had no warnings, we had no idea anything about illicit fentanyl in 2019 and the government failed the person that killed my son by letting him walk the streets after such crimes with no imprisonment time. Now he's just another murder victim himself, drug dealers are killing one another over turf and innocent people get killed too often. Marylanders deserve to feel safe and protected and we are being failed by politicians. You are the ones who can change this.

All I ever wanted was to look him in the eyes and tell him what he took from me and my family and his friends. My life was flipped upside down and I've dedicated my time to saving lives and warning the public. We need this bill to pass to save lives. Marylanders deserve justice and right now we have zero justice.

Sincerely,

April Babcock founder

Lost Voices of Fentanyl Inc

Lvof.org