

HB1398

Criminal Law - Distribution of Heroin or Fentanyl Causing Serious Bodily Injury or Death (Victoria, Scottie, Ashleigh, and Yader's Law)

Committee – Judicial Proceedings

Date – February 18th, 2025

Position – Favorable /In Favor of

Hello, my name is Debbie Santini and I am in favor of the House Bill 1398. My son Jesse Byrd died of fentanyl poisoning on February 16th 2022 in Stella 'Recovery' house on Marda Lane in Annapolis. I am in favor of putting drug dealers and traffickers in prison and to increase incarceration time.

My son was in a car accident on December 21st 2011. He was taken to Shock Trauma and had emergency surgery. He was given opioids for the pain after surgery. Jesse was 16. 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 and fentanyl wasn't even in my vocabulary. Then became the battle of addiction.

There was no criminal investigation into my son's death. 10 people were in that house at the time Jesse died – only 4 were interviewed by Annapolis City Police. **My son was poisoned to death by illicit fentanyl.** This is murder, plain and simple. Fentanyl deaths need to be looked at as drug induced homicides and investigated as crimes. Fentanyl is a Weapon of Mass Destruction. We have lost hundreds of thousands of lives in our country due to illicit fentanyl poisonings, most stemming from the previous administration that allowed this deadly poison to come through our open

borders. That is unacceptable! These drug dealers and traffickers have committed murder and devastated countless lives and destroyed families.

My child did not want to die! He was happy. Jesse had made a list of priorities he wanted to work on but wasn't given the opportunity to accomplish because illicit fentanyl took that away from him. Instead of planning my sons 27th birthday I had to plan his funeral.

Jesse was a sweet, kind, humble and beautiful young man with a smile that would light up any room! That light is gone from this world and mine and my family has not been the same since! Jesse's life mattered and it *still* matters!

I am in favor of putting drug dealers and traffickers in prison and to increase incarceration time. I believe whole heartedly by locking these people up that are distributing poison to our youth and endangering the lives of all American citizens, it will save lives.

It won't bring my child back but it may just save one of yours.

Thank you,
Debbie Santini
Lost Voices of Fentanyl
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