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Rm 321 11am Judiciary Committee Room
House of Delegates Go left

In Support of HB1398-DISTRIBUTION OF HEROIN OR FENTANYL CAUSING SERIOUS BODILY INJURY OR DEATH (VICTORIA, SCOTTIE, ASHLEIGH AND YADER'S LAW)

Dear Honorable Senate Committee Members,

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. 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. There is 0 safe dose of illicit fentanyl to consume. This is not the same as pharmaceutical fentanyl. Illicit fentanyl is being made in jungles of Mexico in five - gallon drums by drug cartels or drug dealers here in their basements and there is 0 quality control like the fentanyl used for surgery or given to patients with extreme pain. Overdose means there is a safe dose to take, you take too much of that safe dose and it causes death or harm. That is not what is happening here in America. My son paid the ultimate price with his life and dealers continue to walk the streets harming and killing Marylanders. Putting drug dealers in jail is harm reduction. Baltimore has the highest death toll per capita in the entire nation. In a 12- month period ending June 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 dealers off our streets so people that do suffer with a substance use disorder have a chance of recovery and those that are first time, experimental and occasional users do not die. Our youth especially should have a chance to