

John Duckett
Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 0066
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
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My name is John Duckett. I'm here today not as an advocate or a policy expert, but as a father whose life was forever changed.

In July of 2022, my son, Jamari Duckett, was killed when a drunk driver, with a blood alcohol level of .13, traveling between 75 and 90 miles per hour in a 40-mile-per-hour zone, slammed into the back of Jamari's vehicle. My son succumbed to his injuries the next day. Jamari's killer was given the maximum sentence of 10 years for his crime, an insufficient sentence for a life stolen. To make matters worse, because DUI Manslaughter is not considered a "violent crime," the man who killed Jamari was released after serving just 2 years of his 10-year sentence. The man who killed my son was released in November 2025 and is now free to live the rest of his life, while I sit here asking lawmakers to right this wrong. For a family shattered forever, that is not justice. It feels like a slap on the wrist for a tragedy that never ends.

Jamari was vibrant, kind, and full of promise. He had dreams, plans, and a future that will never be realized. In one reckless decision, all of that was taken away.

That's why I am asking you to support Senate Bill 0066, Jamari's Law. Jamari's law would increase the maximum sentence for DUI manslaughter from 10 to 20 years for a first conviction and from 15 to 30 years for repeat offenders or those with serious prior convictions. This is not about revenge; it's about accountability. It's about acknowledging the true gravity of taking a human life.

No law, no sentence, will ever bring my son back. But Jamari's Law can save lives. It can send a clear message that drunk driving is not an accident, it is a choice, and choices have consequences.

Please honor Jamari's life, and the lives of so many others, by supporting SB 0066. Let's work together to prevent other families from experiencing this kind of unbearable loss.

Thank you for your time, and for listening to my story.