

February 27, 2026.

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION**

*SB 906 - Criminal Law - Distribution of Heroin or Fentanyl Causing Death or Serious Bodily Injury
(Victoria, Scottie, Ashleigh, and Yader's Law)*

My beautiful son, David A. Nix, died of a Fentanyl overdose in 2020. Holding the person responsible for selling my son the drugs that ultimately killed him will not bring David back. It will not prevent the deaths of others, as we know from data in other states that have these laws in place. The person who sold him drugs is as much a victim of the disease of addiction as was my son. And make no mistake – this is a disease. This law will feed the prison pipeline, discourage folks currently protected under the Good Sam laws from calling for help, and continue to allow the existing stigma and shame around this disease to flourish.

I strongly opposes SB 906 - Criminal Law - Distribution of Heroin or Fentanyl Causing Serious Bodily Injury or Death (Victoria, Scottie, Ashleigh, and Yader's Law). This bill would create harsh new penalties for individuals found liable for distributing heroin or fentanyl if someone gets seriously hurt or dies after using the drugs. This approach of increasing prison sentences to address problems related to drug use has been tried before and has never worked. We urge the General Assembly to instead focus on proven solutions that prevent overdose, like evidence-based substance use treatment and wrap around services for the SUD community.

SB 906 is a well-intentioned response to Maryland's overdose crisis, but it will have the unintended consequences of making a fatal overdose more likely for more Maryland families. Laws like SB 906, often called drug-induced homicide (DIH) laws, do not discourage drug use, deter drug dealing, or reduce the prevalence of fentanyl in the drug supply. SB 906 will instead lead to further mass incarceration and ballooning state prison costs.

DIH laws like SB 906 discourage reporting potentially reversible overdoses due to fear of DIH prosecution. This year's law includes no Good Samaritan protections for individuals potentially liable under the bill even if they report the overdose in good faith. Stories of harsh penalties and DIH prosecutions will circulate and will lead people who use drugs to be hesitant to reach out for help. This could make Maryland's overdose crisis worse at a time when we are finally seeing progress in preventing fatal overdose.

The General Assembly should focus on prevention and treatment rather than new harsh penalties. **I, Debbie E. Nix, urge the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to oppose SB 906.**

David - forever 31

