

# Testimony in Support of HB1386

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

My name is Anita Puckett, and I am the mother of Kevin Puckett, who died from illicit fentanyl poisoning on July 27, 2021, at the age of 27. I am also a Board Member of Lost Voices of Fentanyl, an organization made up of families who have lost loved ones to illicit fentanyl. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB1386.

In the early evening of July 25, 2021, I had the last phone conversation I would ever have with my son Kevin. Sometime after midnight, in the early hours of July 26th, Kevin was poisoned by fentanyl. Kevin had been in recovery for more than a year. After a relapse, he believed he was purchasing heroin, instead, he was given pure fentanyl, which killed him. Kevin had no other drugs in his system.

Kevin was very close to his family. He was a son, a brother, grandson, and a proud uncle to nieces and nephews that he truly loved. Kevin had bright blue eyes and a mischievous smirk that could light up a room. Like so many young people in recovery, he was trying to rebuild his life. That chance was taken away from him by a dealer distributing illicit fentanyl.

HB1386 addresses an important issue when it comes to fentanyl deaths. It creates a felony offense for someone who distributes heroin or fentanyl when that distribution results in death or serious bodily injury. The fentanyl that killed my son did not appear out of nowhere. It moved through a chain of people distributing poison in our communities. Fentanyl is not like the drugs of decades ago, it is incredibly deadly and people that distribute it know there is an extremely high likelihood of ending someone’s life.

What made our loss even harder was the lack of investigation into Kevin’s death. Detectives had Kevin’s phone for three months and never even opened it. There was no meaningful effort made to find who supplied the fentanyl that killed him. When families lose a child this way, we are already dealing with unimaginable grief. When there is little effort to investigate the death or hold anyone accountable, it adds another layer of trauma that is difficult to describe.

Families deserve to know that when a life is taken by illicit fentanyl, it will be treated with the seriousness it deserves! This bill is not about punishing addiction. It focuses on those who are actively distributing dangerous drugs that are killing people.

The reality is simple, illicit fentanyl is killing people, but accountability for the people distributing it never comes. Families like mine are left devastated, while the people who sold the poison face no consequences. That has to change. Every day across this country, hundreds of parents are suffering the same loss that changed my life forever. A son or daughter is gone because of a drug dealer selling illicit fentanyl. Nothing will ever bring my son Kevin back. But legislation like HB1386 can help bring accountability and hopefully prevent other families from experiencing this kind of loss.

V/R,  
Anita Puckett, Cecil County, MD