

Thank you Senator Grassley for providing us with an opportunity to speak today and share the story of our son Bailey who died from fentanyl.

My name is Laurie Arwine and my husband Hans and I lost our youngest son Bailey to an accidental fentanyl overdose almost seven months ago. I want to take a minute to share with you who Bailey was and who was impacted by his death. Bailey is our youngest son and was only 22 years old when he passed away. Bailey was our blessing baby, we thought we were done having children and God blessed us with another sweet baby boy. He is a brother to Brandon and Brittany, an uncle to Axel, Leif and Lohwyn. He was a grandson and a nephew to several aunts, uncles and many cousins. Bailey was a natural athlete who excelled in basketball and track. He started all four years in basketball and scored 1,000 points by his junior year. His long legs made him a natural sprinter in track which helped the Lisbon Lions win three state championships. Bailey was known for his gentle, carefree spirit, his shy quirky smile and his genuine kindness to everyone - he never judged anyone and would be a friend to whoever needed one. He made a definite impact on those who crossed his path. There were over 500 people who attended his visitation and Celebration of Life which is a testament to how many people's lives he touched and were impacted by his death.

April 5, 2022 is the day all our lives changed forever. I remember that afternoon sitting at my desk at school watching my husband walk through the door...I could see the look of intense pain in his eyes and when I asked what was wrong, he uttered three small words that still haunt me...Bailey is gone.

We learned that Bailey had bought Xanax from someone he used to work with. Bailey had face-timed his best friend to show him the pill he bought because it looked different. His friend told him to not take it because it looked like a pressed pill. Unfortunately Bailey still took the pill. The pill Bailey thought was Xanax ended up having a lethal amount of Fentanyl. Bailey did NOT want to die and did not deserve to die from taking a pill he thought was Xanax. Bailey did not struggle from a substance abuse disorder. He was just like so many who would occasionally need Xanax.

Last week, the police investigator in charge of his case advised us they are closing the investigation of Bailey's death due to lack of evidence needed to prosecute. Their decision brought more pain and heartache knowing there will be no justice served for our son's death. The drug dealer who sold Bailey the pill is free on the streets living his life and could still be harming others selling pills.

Action needs to happen to stop drug dealers from selling pills. Action needs to happen to have stronger laws to prosecute those selling pills. Action needs to happen to stop these illegal pills from coming across our borders. Parents need to talk with their children and schools need to talk to students to create awareness about the dangers of buying pills.

Our faith and the promise knowing we will see Bailey again in heaven is the only thing that has helped us get through the pain and emptiness in our hearts we go through everyday with missing our sweet boy. One scripture that we stand on is Romans 8:28: We know that all things work together for good to those that love God and to those who are called according to his purpose. It's hard to even imagine there could be anything good that could come from Bailey's death and nothing can ever bring our son back. However, now we believe our purpose is to share his story and hopefully prevent a family from going through the heartache of losing someone they love so much.

No parent should have to lose their son, no sister or brother should have to lose their sibling, no grandparent should have to lose their grandchild, no aunt or uncle should have to lose their nephew or niece, and no friend should have to lose their best friend from fentanyl.

Fentanyl changed our lives forever. Fentanyl took away a son, a brother, an uncle, a grandson, a cousin, and a kind and caring friend to so many. Fentanyl stole our son from having a future. We need to make a stand now and do something to create awareness of the dangers of fentanyl and stop pills that kill so no other family will have to go through the heartache of losing a loved one. If our actions can take a dealer off the street, we can possibly save lives and ensure Bailey's life will not be forgotten.