

September 6, 2023

Dear Senators,

The continuous opioid crisis affecting America is changing families' lives each day. My life changed on May 14, 2014 when fentanyl robbed me of my only sibling, Archie, then 19 years old. Only what remains are photographs, memories, and some of his old clothes that I still wear which I feel brings him closer. It has been 9 long years and to think what I've selfishly missed is an everlasting wound that never seems to heal.

My brother Archie was and remains still, my very best friend. His soft chuckle and deep navy blue eyes made him contagious. He could converse with anyone, instantly made them feel important, and carried zero judgment about every human he encountered. We had brotherhood, a pact, a "brotherly" connection similar to what twins share. My heart has never felt whole since that tragic day. I realize his laughter, love, and friendship were true gifts. He was -- and will always be -- my greatest sidekick. Archie was strong and passionate about who and what he loved. His family and friends mattered to him the most. He kept loyalty to the highest standard and made sure others felt appreciated.

I don't want you to read this letter and hear it as just another story of someone who lost their life to addiction. We, as a country, are pleading for federal bipartisan consideration of the HALT Fentanyl Act. Rather than write letters to you about our deceased family members, we want day-to-day interactions with the ones we love. Yet, we write because this crisis, which has caused heartbreak across all demographic groups, has only worsened with time. I would never inflict the pain of losing a sibling on anyone and I will fight to keep my brother's death from being in vain. His life mattered! It is my hope that you recognize the severity of the problem and truly hear our voices and understand our pain.

Senators, I respectfully ask you to think of the ones you deeply love and who are close to your hearts and then, with great compassion, pursue passing this important legislation.

*"Please come together as one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."*

Kindly, August Badura

