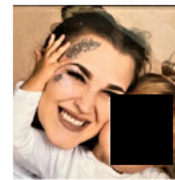


Steve and Cheri Filson



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January 30, 2025

Honorable Senator Chuck Grassley,
Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington D.C., 20510

Dear Senator Grassley and Members of the Committee on the Judiciary,

My name is Steve Filson. I retired after a 31-year career as a Police officer and remain a resident of the City of San Bernardino, California. Most importantly, I am Jessica's Dad. Jessica was my 29-year-old daughter, who, on January 22, 2020, was killed after she ingested cocaine that, unknown to her, illicit fentanyl had been added to. Her ingesting cocaine was a bad decision, but regardless, it should not have been a death sentence. Cocaine, in and of itself, did not kill her; illicit fentanyl did. Fentanyl changes everything! But for fentanyl, Jessica and thousands of others throughout our country would still be alive.

Since that time, I and other bereaved families have involved themselves in educational advocacy as it relates to the deadly potential of illicit fentanyl. We provide information through our non-profit organization, VOID, "Victims of Illicit Drugs." We provide services free of charge, and feeling awareness is the most effective method of harm reduction. It further provides a legacy to Jessica's life. How she died is a story that needs to be told to save lives.

We also direct our efforts in certain legislative efforts. As we meet today to witness testimony as part of the Committee on the Judiciary, we urge the passage of the HALT Fentanyl Act out of committee to the floor of the Senate, House of Representatives, and President Trump's desk for his signature. Since Jessica's death, we have witnessed the matter of rescheduling being considered by the legislature during each Congressional session, only to be retained by the passage of a continuing resolution. The time has come to acknowledge that illicit fentanyl has no medical benefit and is highly addictive, providing its earned place as a Schedule 1 Control Substance under the Uniform Controlled Substances Act. Any concern surrounding issues relating to continuing research of pharmaceutical fentanyl is mitigated by the language contained in the current bill language. Placing fentanyl into the appropriate schedule and providing needed sentences involving enhanced quantity thresholds is long overdue. Let us finally employ the required level of common sense by providing additional tools to address this continuing scourge affecting every community in our nation.

My wife and I sincerely thank you and the Committee for your efforts. Please solidify a meaningful method in combatting illicit fentanyl through the passage of this important legislative proposal.

With Sincerest Regards,

Steve and Cheri Filson, [REDACTED] California