

February 1, 2025

**The Honorable Chuck Grassley**

Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee  
United States Senate  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: HALT Fentanyl Act

Dear Chairman Grassley and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to you as a bereaved parent whose life was forever changed by the fentanyl crisis. My son, Michael, was just 20 years old when he tragically passed away due to fentanyl poisoning. What should have been a bright and promising future was cut short by a single, deceptive fake prescription pill that contained fentanyl.

Our nightmare began when my son ingested what he believed to be a legitimate prescription pill. Like so many young people, he trusted that what he was getting was safe. However, that pill was made with a lethal dose of fentanyl—a powerful synthetic opioid that is 50 times more potent than heroin. There were no warnings, no second chances, and no opportunity to say goodbye.

The shock and devastation of losing Michael have been indescribable. Our family has been torn apart by the grief that follows such an unimaginable loss. Every day, we struggle to navigate life without his infectious smile, his laughter, and the dreams he had yet to fulfill. Birthdays, holidays, and everyday moments have become painful reminders of his absence.

Beyond our personal loss, this tragedy has opened our eyes to the rampant and deadly spread of counterfeit pills containing fentanyl. These pills are being sold on social media platforms by dealers, targeting vulnerable young people who often have no idea they are consuming a potentially fatal substance. This is not just a crisis—it is a public health emergency that demands immediate and decisive action.

In the wake of my son's death, our family has committed to raising awareness and educating others about the dangers of fentanyl. We have spoken at schools, organized community events, and partnered with other bereaved families who share our mission. While these efforts are meaningful, they are not enough. We need strong federal legislation to address this epidemic and hold those responsible for distributing this deadly substance accountable.

The HALT Fentanyl Act is a critical step in this fight. Strengthening law enforcement's ability to combat the trafficking of fentanyl and its analogs is essential to saving lives. Equally important is increasing public awareness, enhancing prevention efforts, and ensuring that young people and families have access to accurate information and life-saving resources.

I urge you to consider the stories of families like mine as you deliberate on this legislation. Our voices represent the countless lives already lost and the many more that can be saved if we act swiftly and decisively. Fentanyl poisoning does not discriminate—it affects families from every background and community.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and for your dedication to protecting the lives of our nation's young people. Please honor the memory of my son and the thousands of others lost to fentanyl poisoning by supporting the HALT Fentanyl Act.

Sincerely,

Mona Leonardi

Yountville, CA

██████████@michaelleenardifoundation.org

██████████