

Dear Members of Congress:

I am writing today to talk to you about the fentanyl poisoning of our son Nicholas Hunter Loberg on October 12, 2020. He was 20 years young. Picture this: It was a Monday . . . a normal day. That evening my last interaction with him was at 8:30 pm when we had a conversation just outside of his bedroom about plans for the next morning for him starting a new job which he was very excited about. Everything was very normal. No red flags. I then walked into Nicks bedroom at 9:15 pm to say goodnight and he was unconscious on the floor. The horror and shock are indescribable. I called 911 while screaming for my husband Jeff to come downstairs. He immediately started CPR and administered Narcan while I stayed on the phone on my front porch screaming until help arrived. We had to wait in our living room while they tried to revive our son. Despite their best efforts Nick did not make it and our hearts were shattered. Now, we are left to try to heal from the loss of our son and our two daughters are shattered over the loss of their little brother and our family is broken. Autopsy showed 4.7 nl of fentanyl plus the three prescriptions he was on. It was called "multiple drug toxicity" . . . but we found out later that it takes only 2 grains of fentanyl to cause death.

Nick had just been home from treatment only a month. The experience of a child that is having problems with substance use disorder is not for the faint of heart. It is a journey of ups and downs, trials and triumphs for them and for the family. Yet, never in a million years did I think we would lose our son...let alone lose him to fentanyl.

Nick was a fun and sweet kid who grew into a handsome young man who loved to be outside, to cook and draw. Nick's two older sisters loved having a baby brother. We had a happy and wonderful family of five. We loved our children, gave them a good and happy home, and it was important to spend time together camping, traveling all over the country and spending time at our cabin. As Nick got to middle and high school he did struggle with anxiety, which many young teens do - and we took many measures to get him the right help. He had a therapist, and psychiatrist in his late teens. He had several prescriptions to help him with his anxiety and sleep but he felt it wasn't doing enough and he would supplement with weed which eventually progressed into other drugs. He had been in in-patient treatment three times and out-patient treatment following each of those. Despite his struggles with substance use disorder we never stopped loving or supporting our son. He had a steady girlfriend for 3 years who deeply loved and supported him. They had hopes and dreams and were planning their young lives - looking forward to a home and family together. We were looking forward to that too. In an instant those hopes and dreams were abruptly cut short by illicit fentanyl. Imagine how traumatic it is to have a loved one alive and with you one second, and dead the next second.

There are thousands of families like ours in Minnesota and across the country. We are grieving, replaying the day our loved ones died over and over. It hits you every single day. What is happening to the dealers that sold them the fentanyl? In most cases they are living their lives, untouched by the devastation they have caused . . . maybe a court appearance and slap on the wrist. A message needs to be sent to the dealers and cartels that they are not invincible and that they will be charged for their crimes and will go to prison. It is right to charge people who knowingly or unknowingly cause death. In my opinion, there is no penalty too harsh for fentanyl crimes. This is not a moral issue, a race issue or a social issue . . . its a red, white and blue issue . . . a Minnesota issue...our nations issue, and time is of the essence.

When you go home today try to really think how it would feel to be us . . . to be our family. Whole one minute, ripped apart the next. Having to have a funeral for your child. Having to bury your child. Having your child's ashes on your mantle. Having the last picture you ever took of them now be their "forever age" photo. You never get to see them ever again. You will not see them get married, have a family or grow old. The grief walks with you every moment of every day. Now think of the person that sold them the drugs - they are walking amongst you and your family in the world and you have no recourse. You just HOPE and PRAY that the laws in place will give you some justice. The dealer gets to be alive with choices . . . but you have no choice but to live with the aftermath of your child's death. Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are.

"United we stand, divided we fall" is a famous quote. I would like to add that it's our children that are falling victim to the deceit of drug dealers and the fatal result of illicit fentanyl. United we can make a difference. Thank you for taking time to read this. I miss my son more than any words can describe. Any time I get to speak my sons name is a blessing.

Nicholas Hunter Loberg 12/29/1999 ~ 10/12/2020 . . . Forever 20 . . . Victim of illicit fentanyl

Very Sincerely,

~ Michelle Loberg (Nick's mom)

Elk River MN

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