

HALT Fentanyl Act

CHAIRMAN GRASSLEY AND RANKING MEMBER DURBIN

My name is Danielle Harland, and I am the mother of William Klein, he was 32 when he died from what the medical examiner called "fentanyl intoxication." The medical examiner ruled this an accident but yet once we dug into the story this was no accident, this was a homicide. My son was intoxicated on fentanyl, he was poisoned.

My son struggled with addiction from a young age. First at 15 or so with marijuana then gradually over the span of 17 years experimenting with many other drugs. He also was in and out of rehab facilities, jail, sober houses, AA meetings and eventually prison. In April 2018, my son was ordered to go to a place in Oklahoma City. He was living in Guymon, Oklahoma at the time. The place was a men's treatment facility called Firststep Men's Recovery Program. I took him there only to have him call me on my 4-hour drive home to tell me he had been kicked out because they found drugs on him when they completed his check in. I said sorry buddy you are on your own, I love you. That is what started him living in a sober living house of a young man that would become his best friend, Emake Fisher. Emake too had his battles with addiction and prison, but he had become a strong pillar in the recovery community.

My son would lead a life of ups and downs for the next 3 years in Oklahoma City. Sober sometimes and not others. In and out of programs and meetings, "The Rooms." He made so many friends because my son was such a great guy! He loved people and he loved helping people. He would give you the shirt off his back even if it was the only thing he had. He made an impact on the sober community in OKC but he also made his mark on the drug community too.

In later 2020, William met a girl who was big time on the streets. She is who introduced him to fentanyl sometime in early 2021. In October 2021 my son was arrested for the final time for stealing a car. Thankfully no charges were pressed but because he didn't handle all the "other" issues he had from run ins with law enforcement in several counties he was sentenced to complete a program at Charles E. "Bill" Johnson Correctional Center in Alva, Oklahoma. Of course he hated it the first few months, but after he began to understand why he was there, he got involved. He completed classes and programs, mentored others by leading AA meetings and even began being a sponsor to some of the other guy, one who said at his funeral that William saved their life.

On January 12, 2023, I went and picked up my son from BJCC. He had completed his 15-month program. I was so proud of him, and he was proud of himself. He came out with a

state issued ID, his social security card, a sober house to live in and a job! Yes, this program at BJCC would hold job fairs where companies from Oklahoma City and the surrounding areas would come and meet with inmates to see if they were a fit for an open position they may have once the inmate was released. My son matched with B&H Construction LLC in Oklahoma City. This company offered him the opportunity to rebuild himself and never held it against him that he had a record or a substance abuse problem. They encouraged their guys with many additional programs offered in addition to employment. After about 2 months there, my son fell back to his addiction and overdosed on heroin on the job. Heroin was his drug of choice and had been the two years prior to being sentence to BJCC. They gave him the opportunity to go to a rehab facility in Colorado for 30 days and he did. Unfortunately, he didn't feel the fit was right for him any longer at B&H so he went back to the sober living house he had lived in and out of for about 4 years in OKC that was owned by his best friend, Emake. He thought being there and attending meetings everyday it would help him stay clean. Unfortunately, it was an on and off again struggle from May to August 2023.

On August 10th, 2023 William decided once again he was done. He began a challenge of 90 meetings in 90 days. Every day he would attend some kind of AA meeting somewhere in Oklahoma City. After a little over a month of sobriety he found a job at a Holiday Inn close by his sober living home which happened to be the very first house he went into years before. They once again had allowed him to move back in early August 2023. He was again on top of things. This job was so perfect for him. It was a maintenance position and he was so great in working with his hands. His boss and co-workers loved him. He was so excited, I remember talking with him one day on the phone and he just raved about all the things he was going to help fix and implement at the hotel to make it one of the best hotels in OKC. I thought, "my son is back!" I was so happy!

On the evening of October 5th, 2023 we had our normal, almost daily, phone conversation. He was upbeat and was on his way home from setting a temporary power pole at his best friend's country property where they were working on building a new home to make room for more guys in the sober house. They were going to move in out there once it was finished. I spoke to both he and his best friend, Emake. We had to hang up because they were getting pulled over by the police. They had a light out on the trailer they were pulling that I why the officer pulled them over. They went back to the house to drop off the trailer, like they were instructed by the officer to do. With not enough time to get to his home group meeting, Back 2 Basics, they just hung out at the house and studied their AA book and had a meeting that way. He did call me back and tell me everything was ok from being pulled over and what they were going to do. It was a beautiful conversation for what would become my last call with my son EVER!

Sometime later that night a girl reached out via Facebook Messenger asking him if he wanted some Xanax or Fent. He didn't respond for a while. When he did respond he said do you have heroin, remember I said heroin was his drug of choice, even though he was

familiar with Fentanyl and had used it before. Mind you my son knew this girl. Her name is Abby. She had been part of the Back 2 Basics group years back. She had attended the sober high school in Oklahoma City. She even had lived with the CEO of that school and his wife for a time. According to another messenger I saw from her to someone else, she was trying to solicit drugs to, she had been "plugged in and needed to make some sales." Like she was selling Girl Scout cookies or car insurance. It angered me when I discovered this! She was a dealer of death and she knew it. When William agreed, she brought the drugs to the sober living house but he told her to pull down the street and he would come out. He got into the back of the car and proceeded to smoke with her and her boyfriend who was the driver of the car. He made his purchase and went back to the sober living house. He had been in the bathroom when one of the housemates noticed he was being a little off. He questioned William if he was high and then proceeded to go get Emake from the other room. He told him William was high. When Emake confronted William, he did not deny that he was high. He and Emake proceeded to have a long conversation about what had taken place that night. William cried to him asking him "why can I not stop." Emake told him they would talk about all this tomorrow but for now he would take William anywhere he wanted to go because he couldn't stay at the sober house because they have a no tolerance policy. William said it's ok I will walk to my job and just crash in one of the out of service rooms. He handed Emake a foil from his pocket and said "throw this away." William went inside got a few things together and went back outside. He and Emake hugged and told each other "love you brother" and walked away. Emake said, "I'll see you tomorrow."

Tomorrow never came for my son. He walked to the hotel, scanned into a room at 1:57 am and was never heard from or seen alive again. There were no outgoing or incoming calls on his phone after he left the sober house until Friday when he didn't show up for work. Unfortunately, they didn't check that room once Emake told them what had happened when the hotel called to find out why William wasn't at work. No one knew he was in that room. Truthfully Emake thought William was back out on the street. No one had seen or heard from William and it was like he disappeared. All the sober community people were calling everywhere trying to find him: hospitals, jails, known dealers etc. No one knew where he was. Not until Sunday when Williams boss checked a room that had the locks locked from the inside and called Emake and said "I think I found William." Room 238 would be the room that my son died in and laid dead in for at least what we believe to be 60+ hours. Alone and dead. He died alone! Of course the police responded but the officer NEVER called me to tell me my son was dead. He NEVER did a homicide investigation when it was obvious it was fentanyl. He gathered his evidence, called Emake and left. The Oklahoma City Medical Examiner wouldn't go back and figure out exactly what time my son died. They just said, "it's not like the movies and TV, we don't do that." To them my son was just another addict who died. After toxicology it would be discovered that my son died from 21ng of pure fentanyl. I asked my personal physician if he suffered and he said, no. He also indicated that he probably had up to 3x the amount shown on the results as fentanyl dissipates in the body even after death.

I am requesting that the HALT Fentanyl Act passed clean so that maybe just maybe we can save lives instead of families feeling the awful loss of our children. More education needs to happen like in the Mrs Nancy Reagan days, "JUST SAY NO!" We need to educate out law enforcement that these just aren't addicts, junkies, whatever they want to call the people who have been murdered from fentanyl. We need laws to be written for people being caught with fentanyl and what the punishment looks like. This is killing a massive amount of Americans. It's killed more Americans combined then the Iraq, Afghanistan and Vietnam wars. We must stand together to fight against this poison and its pushers!!! We need PERMANT scheduling of this illicit drug. Every day that goes by lives are being lost. We cannot afford to have this bill held up in Congress any longer. When this was first heard in May 2023 had it passed then maybe my son would still be here, maybe not. But what I do know is I want to help get awareness out there so that others don't have to feel the pain I do every day!

PLEASE PASS THIS BILL CLEAN!!!!!!