

The Honorable Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Subject: Fentanyl Scheduling Hearing – A Mother's Plea for Action
02/02/2025

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I write to you today with a grief that has no end. My name is Andrea Thomas, and I am a mother who lost everything in the blink of an eye—because of fentanyl. My daughter, **Ashley**, was stolen from me on June 11, 2018, by **just half of a pill**. A pill that she believed to be a safe, familiar medication to ease her pain. A pill that was instead deceptively made with fentanyl. A pill that ended her life.

Ashley was only 32 years old. She was a **mother**, a loving mother to my grandson, who was only seven at the time. My grandson will never feel his mother's embrace again, hear her laughter, or make a new memory with her. He will grow up with stories instead of moments.

But the tragedy did not stop with Ashley. The devastation did not stop with my family. The very next day, Ashley's boyfriend, **the one who gave her that fatal pill**—took his own life in unbearable grief. Two young lives were gone. **Two families shattered**. Forever.

Neither of them knew that illicit fentanyl had infiltrated our communities, masquerading as prescription medication. Neither of them had any warning. Ashley did not suffer from a pill addiction. She was simply **unaware**, as so many others are.

And this devastation is not mine alone. Through my work with **Facing Fentanyl**, I have met thousands of grieving parents just like me, each carrying the same unbearable burden. We are an army of broken mothers and fathers, siblings, and children, left behind to piece together the wreckage that fentanyl has left in its wake. We are growing in numbers that defy comprehension. This is **not** an epidemic—it is an all-out war on the American people, and we are losing.

The numbers are staggering, but they are **not just numbers**. Every statistic is someone's child. Someone's mother. Someone's best friend. Someone's future. The **fentanyl crisis is killing indiscriminately, and it is killing more people than we can even begin to count**. It is destroying families. It is leaving children orphaned. It is creating a wave of grief that spans coast to coast. **This crisis does not discriminate**.

- **It kills the unsuspecting, like my daughter, who had no idea fentanyl was in that pill.**
- **It kills those experimenting, young people making a reckless but not fatal choice— until fentanyl turns it into a death sentence.**
- **It kills those who seek it, because one dose too strong is all it takes.**

I write this as a **plea to you**—to take action that **will save lives**. The scheduling of illicit fentanyl and its analogs as **Schedule I substances must be made permanent**. There is no room for hesitation and no space for loopholes. Every delay, every compromise, means another mother will wake up to find her child lifeless in their bed. Another father will have to pick out a casket. Another child will be forced to grow up without a parent.

This is **not about politics**. This is about **human lives**. It is about the thousands of families who will sit down for dinner tonight with an empty chair at the table. It is about the next Ashley. The next unsuspecting victim will take what they think is medicine or take something that seems harmless and never wake up.


Please, hear me. **Hear us**. If fentanyl had not entered our country in such an unchecked, rampant way, my daughter would still be here. My grandson would still have his mother. Ashley's boyfriend would still be alive. **Two families would not be destroyed by half of a pill.**

How many more must die before we act? How many more children must be left behind? How many more funerals, how many more urns, how many more broken hearts?

I cannot bring Ashley back. But maybe—just maybe—I can save someone else's daughter. **Maybe, together, we can stop another family from being destroyed.**

I ask you: Will you help us? Or will you let more families suffer the same fate as mine? With the deepest grief and the strongest urgency,

Andrea Thomas

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