

To whom it may concern,

My name is Joseph F. Budjinski III and I am writing to express my support for the nomination of Mr. Terry Cole as the new Administrator of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. I believe Mr. Cole has the knowledge, experience, leadership capability and vision to not only lead one of the most important law enforcement agencies our country has but also has the knowledge and understanding of how to combat what is truly one of the most important battles our country faces, the fight against fentanyl and other deadly synthetic drugs.

I say this with conviction for several reasons. The first one being that I too have come from a long background in law enforcement and public safety spanning almost three decades. As a veteran of the United States Marine Corps, I served as a Military Policeman and Presidential Security Specialist at HMX-1. I spent almost ten years as a Virginia State Trooper. I spent another decade serving in corporate security for a fortune 100 company and six years encompassed as a Nuclear Security Officer. So, I not only know the rigors of the job, the challenges that officers face and the demanding aspects that this occupational field entails from an enforcement aspect, but I also know the devastating effects of drugs and the effects that drug addiction has on a family firsthand. On June 30, 2024, I lost my precious, beloved 17-year-old son Joseph "Hunter" Budjinski to Fentanyl poisoning. One pill took my sons life and left him collapsed on his bedroom floor. Hunter was brilliant. He had just graduated High School one month prior and even graduated a whole year early. There are absolutely no words to express the pain I have endured from losing my one and only child. His autopsy revealed there were other deadly synthetic drugs used as fillers in the pressed pill that he took that have never been approved by the FDA and aren't even legal to possess in the United States, yet a seventeen-year-old child was able to purchase such deadly and potent drugs in broad daylight in Chesterfield County Virginia that would take his life just hours later.

It is for this reason why "We the People" NEED strong, effective and knowledgeable leadership in our countries top law enforcement agencies. Specifically, in the United States Drug Enforcement Agency. Mr. Cole has what it takes. He knows the job; he knows law enforcement operationally and administratively. He understands the importance of working together and coordinating with other agencies to combat organized crime and drug trafficking. Mr. Coles approach to drug enforcement is multi-faceted. He believes in a combination of aggressive law enforcement actions, community outreach programs and education initiatives to combat drug abuse. He also has a keen interest in helping agencies and communities assist those who already have an active addiction and substance abuse disorder. But one of the topics that I find most

remarkable is Terry's stance on cannabis. #notlegalfordistributuion. That spoke volumes to me that he truly "gets it" when it comes to understanding how dangerous and deadly marijuana is as well. The fact that he knows the devastating effects of marijuana and he does not condone nor favor a drug that society (and even our government) has pushed to normalize, forced us to accept and has allowed for sale/distribution as if it has no harmful effects are remarkable. That is a leader, someone who is willing to stand up for what is right, despite what society tries to sway and allow just for monetary gain. With Mr. Cole's appointment, the new Presidential administration will hopefully push for a shift in the regulations regarding the cannabis industry, its effects on the economy and public health.

I don't know if we will ever be able to "remove all the salt from the sea" so to speak and truly eradicate all illegal drugs; but without effective, strong, passionate and knowledgeable leaders at the helm in our countries top law enforcement agencies-we will continue to have countless unnecessary deaths due to drugs.

I urge you to please strongly consider the appointment of Mr. Terry Cole as U.S. DEA Administrator. My son deserved a fighter to advocate for his best interest and so many other families in our country are relying on and need the experience and vision that Mr. Cole will bring.

Sincerely,

Joe Budjinski III