

September 2023

Dear Senators:

As the mother of an 18-year-old son who died of fentanyl poisoning in December 2022, I implore you to work with your colleagues and shut off the spigot once and for all that not only allowed Fentanyl Related Substances (FRS) to enter our country legally, but incentivized their creation. Because of my friend Lauri Badura and her son Archie, you have before you bill language that passed the Wisconsin legislature on a unanimous vote, was adopted as national policy by the DEA, and which passed the House of Representatives earlier this summer. It's time for the Senate to act and make permanent temporary scheduling of FRS into Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act.

Our son Owen was battling a severe mental illness, most likely schizophrenia, and had learned to self-medicate with drugs to subdue his symptoms as so many struggling with mental illness do. I found him 2 days after Christmas, hunched over a table in his bedroom where he had been snorting a line of cocaine the previous night. He did not ask for fentanyl to be added to that cocaine, and I can tell you for a fact he did not want to die. He was enrolled in a treatment program for both the mental illness as well as an AODA support group and all he needed was a little more time to get the medication and counseling sessions right. Owen was a son, a brother, a cousin, a nephew and a grandson and we all miss him every day. He will never get the chance to go to college, get married, or raise a family. We are still waiting, but at this point nothing has even been done with the dealer who supplied this deadly drug.

Becky Zingler

