

Good afternoon Chair Williamson and the House Judiciary Committee. My name is Brenda Martinek, a Washington county resident.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of HB 2797.

I am blessed with a loving and supportive family, as you have heard from my two beautiful and compassionate daughters. This takes so much courage for them to speak while they continue to walk through the rest of their lives with sadness and a forever-broken heart.

As a parent we will do anything to keep our children safe. This is just what I did. From the moment I held Taylor in my arms as he smiled at me with his beautiful, radiant smile, I knew he was special and would do amazing things with his life. We would raise him to love others, have compassion for those less fortunate, be the best at what ever he dreamt to be and always help those in need. And this is what my son did.

He was a compassionate friend, a goofy and loving brother, great athlete, and all-star football player who went on to play football at PSU. He would literally give the coat off his back to people he found cold and homeless (I know because of all of the coats I had to buy him) and he even received a police medal for courage by the Portland Police Bureau for running down a suspect who had stolen something from someone on the MAX train.

My son dreamed of many things, but being addicted to pain meds was definitely not one of them. He was strong, courageous and always hopeful that he would stop feeling the need to take pain pills. You see, he had multiple shoulder surgeries and became addicted to OxyContin. Due to systems that don't work, treatment that is far less than adequate and his brain that wouldn't allow him to stop physically needing the opioids, he relapsed.

When you're a parent, there are phone calls that you pray you never receive. I got that call, on the night that my youngest daughter was going to her first Father/Daughter dance. When I heard the words "I think Taylor's dead", my heart stopped. Time stood still and the world went into slow motion. We couldn't drive to his apartment fast enough. When I stepped out of the car, the deputy just shook her head and looked at me with sad, devastation in her eyes – and I dropped to the ground, my legs unable to hold my grief. All I wanted to do was hold him, hug him one more time, tell him how much I loved him and how sorry I was that I could not keep him safe. All I was able to do is hold a cold, lifeless body and just brush through his beautiful hair one more time and kiss him on the cheek ... I love you to the moon and back forever...

But neither my testimony today, nor this law will bring back my son, but hopefully it will help protect those who have not yet died from a drug dealer. I'm here in honor of all the parents who have vowed to keep their children safe and for the 87 names

of loved ones on this poster board, who also lost their life to overdose deaths – their average age is only 30 years old. We are literally losing an entire generation and need to do something to stop this opioid epidemic.

While its easier to focus on the addict and their decisions or whether they could have had more will to “just say no”, today we are focusing on the suppliers; the drug dealers who profit and prey on those who are suffering with an illness. Some families have shared with me that when their child was in treatment, drug dealers would literally wait outside for them to try and sell them drugs.

Without stricter penalties and an enhancement law to assist in the prosecution of drug dealers, they will continue to make money off of our loved ones who are struggling and fighting as hard as they can to stay “clean”. This bill is not the only thing we as a state and a nation need to do to help support our loved ones, as we need prevention education in schools, more mental health supports, treatment facilities that have enough beds to support the need. This is not an exhaustive list, but....

We also need penalties for the suppliers, the drug dealers who are not the users but the ones who are preying and profiting off of people with an illness.

Please support HB 2797, and protect our most marginalized loved ones who need your protection. This illness knows no race, socioeconomic status or privilege. We are here to speak on behalf of all families who are not able to advocate for their loved ones.

Save a life... or how about saving 87 lives – one life for each of the lives on this poster, who were lost.

Please pass HB 2797. Thank you for your time and consideration.