

## Taylor's Law

I am writing to express my strong support of HB 2797, Taylor's Law.

In 2017 I lost two important people in my family. I lost my cousin Taylor in January and my ex-boyfriend John and father of my now 12-year-old son. Both died of drug over doses that had been laced with fentanyl. As one would expect my family and I were absolutely devastated with both deaths.

I will never forget the phone I received saying my cousin Taylor had died, listening to my mom as she cried over the phone. Taylor was funny, talented and always happy. He was also deeply loved by a family who did everything right. I couldn't process how this could have happened. You hear the words but it just wasn't processing. I was very sad and very worried about my Aunt, Uncle and my cousins Erin and Christian. My dad and two of my sisters left the next morning to provide support the best they could. When they returned, they were deeply affected and shared with us all of the pain everyone was going through. My Aunt, Uncle and cousins were suffering greatly and there was no amount of comfort that could help their pain.

When John died, I had just finished taking a final college exam. I received the phone call that John had been found and was in the ICU from a drug over dose and things didn't look good. I then had to go home and look my 11-year-old son in the eyes, knowing his Dad was dying. Later I had to tell him that his dad was very sick and going to die. At this point he was completely brain dead and on life support awaiting surgery for organ donation. I sat and cried as I tried to explain what happened and gave my son an option to go to the hospital and see him or you can hold on to the memories you have

and chose how you want to remember seeing him. Can you imagine having to have that conversation with such a young person? John was trying to beat his addiction. Our family had been helping him, and he had a bad night and turned back to drugs, but this time it ended in his death. It robbed my son of having a relationship with his dad and my cousin of a full life and changed the lives of those who loved him.

Both our families live with hurt. Nothing will ever be the same. We are incomplete and live with pain every day from losing our loved ones, and for me this has hit home twice. You see when this happens it's like a grenade going off affecting everything within reach.

Both Taylor and John were sold drugs by drug dealers who are walking without any repercussions for contributing to the death of our loved ones. I can't process how this can happen. How can there be manslaughter charges when you contribute to someone's death in other cases but not when they knowing sell lethal drugs?

Although both Taylor and John have responsibility for their choices, of which they have deeply paid for, we are hopeful that if there are strong penalties for selling drugs and results in death, it will act as a deterrent towards drug dealers and prevent future families from going through the pain and agony my family lives with on a daily basis.

Thank you,  
Brittney Martinek