

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB 2502, HB 3321, HB 3375

Dear Co-Chairs Prozanski and Kropf, and members of the committee,

My name is Jennifer Epstein, and I am writing to express my strong support for HB 3321, HB 2502 and HB 3375. My husband and I have lived in Oregon for nearly 30 years, and we raised our boys on the west side of Portland. In 2020 our family was devastated by the loss of our bright, funny, empathetic 18-year-old son Cal, who lost his life to a fake prescription pill made of fentanyl.

Overnight my life changed. I went from being blissfully unaware of how dangerous today's street drugs have become to becoming an expert regularly consulting with the OR Department of Education, school districts, ONDCP, DEA, and more. Since early 2021, I have been working full-time with Song for Charlie to educate youth and families about the dangers of today's drug landscape, in Oregon and nationally. I'd like to share what I am hearing from two groups:

- Oregon Kids: Our kids want our help. When I have the opportunity to educate youth, they thank me for sharing my knowledge. They are grateful someone is looking out for them and willing to be open and honest with them. They ask great questions, including how they can help. Sadly, about 1/3 of Oregon youth have lost someone they personally know from drug overdose, and they want to prevent additional deaths.
- Oregon Parents: Most parents do not understand the risks their kids face from drugs today. They've heard about fentanyl, but they think it is mostly an issue for Portland's homeless population. They don't realize kids are inadvertently getting it in pills sold as Xanax or Adderall. They don't realize how easy it is for kids to get vapes with THC. The drug landscape is changing too fast for the average parent to keep up, and they need help.

Oregon families live side by side with the powerful wine, beer, and cannabis industries. These industries are not going away—they bring millions of dollars to Oregon and will continue to have major influence in our state. We need to learn how to live and be healthy with these powerful entities as neighbors, and we need to teach our kids how to lead healthy lives while living with these industries in their backyard.

We are the adults in the room, and we need to stand up for Oregon's youth. Thank you for considering these bills to protect Oregon's kids.

