

VICTIMS OF ILLICIT DRUGS
STOPTHEVOID.ORG

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March 7, 2022

The Honorable Tony Jurgens, Representative
District 54B
Minnesota House of Representatives
P.O. Box 503
Hastings, Minnesota 55033

Re: HF No. 3655/Substance Misuse Awareness and Prevention

Dear Representative Jurgens,

My name is Jaime Puerta. I am the President of VOID. Even though a resident of the State of California, I was overwhelmed at the thought of a State Legislature proactively understanding the problem surrounding illicit fentanyl, and taking steps in introducing legislation, mandating awareness education to students in grades 6 through 12. As grieving parents, of children deceptively poisoned by illicit fentanyl, we have focused our efforts in warning the public of this immediate danger. Please remember the following three points:

- Fentanyl changes everything
- But for Fentanyl, our children would still be with us
- Fentanyl is a problem that most don't seem to know exist

Unsuspecting victims can simply visit a social media site such as Snapchat, and easily find a dealer deceptively selling a product believed to be a legitimate pharmaceutical pill such as OxyContin, Percocet, Xanax, or Adderall. Sadly, this counterfeit pill is made of a neutral base, and fentanyl. It is then pressed into pill form that virtually copy's the legitimate one, the victims take it, and never wakes up. Thousands upon thousands of these pills exist in every community throughout our nation. The DEA estimates from the millions of pills seized annually, 4 in 10, contain a lethal dose of fentanyl.

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In April 2020, my 15-year-old son Daniel was the victim of this deception and was killed after taking ½ of what he believed to be Oxycontin, purchased from a dealer on SnapChat.

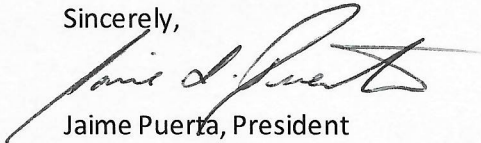
The importance in making HF No. 3655 law, will provide a process in which the message of this scourge of Fentanyl will spread, and will serve as a warning to unsuspecting victims and their families, who will in the event of their child's poisoning, live daily, wondering what happened, and why didn't they know about it?

VOID has participated in numerous assembly presentations in which this life saving message is spread to our youth, their families, and educators. We begin our presentations by showing a 21-minute documentary we were privileged to participate in detailing our family stories. The documentary viewing is followed by a question-and-answer session. This takes less than an hour, and our experience has been the students hearing the message are riveted at its content and thankful for being provided with the life-saving knowledge.

I could go on and on about this, but for the purpose of this correspondence, I wanted to applaud you and the Minnesota Legislature in considering this important lifesaving legislation. Fentanyl is not only distributed through counterfeit pills but is added to other illegal substance such as heroin, methamphetamine, and cocaine. We are now hearing of it also found in Cannabis. The first level of harm reduction is awareness. When knowing of its prevalent existence in our society, awareness is the obvious first step in saving lives.

Thank you for your time. Should you have any questions or if we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me. Please stay safe and thank you for putting our children first.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jaime D. Puerto". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Jaime Puerto, President