

Taylor's Law:

Taylor Martinek was an outgoing, loving, caring, thoughtful, energetic and hurting young man who should not be dead.

Taylor was my daughter's honorary big brother. He loved them as sisters looking out for their safety and wellbeing. He wanted to know who they were dating and if he needed to have "chats" with them to make sure they were being treated right. He included them in his special occasions, holidays and game nights. Taylor loved everyone, he brought joy, even through his pain of addiction. Needless to say the loss of Taylor has impacted my family greatly to this day. My family continues to mourn; the grief, depression/anxiety and anger is with us daily clouding all we are and do. Our holidays and special events – most of which are spent with the Martinek's, are forever changed, made worse because they shouldn't be happening without Taylor. Taylor should not be dead.

I am a Mental Health Therapist and I love Taylor– I had many conversations with Taylor about addiction and mental health. Taylor just wanted to get better. He tried so hard. Yes, Taylor was an addict and he was working on his sobriety. Sobriety is not an easy path, if it was our society would not have this insidious disease that takes and takes and takes. It makes you believe there is no hope of recovery, leaving you in excruciating pain. Couple that with dealers whose only goal is to keep you addicted and the chance of recovery diminishes even more. Taylor has wonderful parents who were able to get him treatment, Taylor had others who he could turn to for support. But Taylor also had old dealers who knew how to work his addiction and make relapse sound like the only way to feel better, to find some joy or peace if even for a little while. Those dealers killed him. They prey on the sick and weak. They keep the disease alive while killing our children.

I work for a school district and work daily with students who are trying to get sober. NO ONE intends to grow up to be an addict. Every person I've met never thought it could happen to them- They are "too smart to become addicted". That is not how this disease works, it is indiscriminate, no one is immune. We have to hold the people who proliferate and profit off this disease accountable.

There is a hole in my chest that is the loss of Taylor. I can't take a full breath and feel whole. The immense pain left behind for myself and those I love is indescribable.

My heart breaks for my friends who have to wake up every morning to the reality that their son is dead.

I beg of you, this legislation can have an impact. Please hold those who prey on those suffering from this disease accountable. They do prey on the sick, they seek out and keep the disease alive in any way they can. They cut the pills with fentanyl and stamp them to appear real. They need to be stopped and you have that power. Please pass house bill 2797 -Taylor's Law.

Respectfully,

Mary Massey