

Submitter: Sen Suzanne Weber
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Commerce and Consumer Protection
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1032

Chair Sosa, Vice-chairs Chaichi and Osborne, members of the committee - For the record my name is Suzanne Weber, and I represent the people of Senate District 16, which includes Tillamook, Clatsop, and Columbia Counties, as well as portions of Washington, Multnomah and Yamhill counties. My testimony is in support of SB 1032.

I will admit that, prior to hearing from a constituent, I was unaware of recreational uses of Difluoroethene, or DFE. I just thought of it as harmless canned air that I used to clean my keyboard. Likely, that's how most of us see it. But I was brought the story of Joleen, a talented, artistic newlywed whose life was cut short by the decisions of someone who had easy access to this deceptively dangerous product. I am incredibly thankful to Joleen's aunt and my constituent, Kim, for bringing Joleen's story to my attention.

As you can read in Kim's written testimony, abuse of DFE is becoming a nationwide emergency. Between 2006 and 2022, over 1,000 deaths and more than 28,000 emergency room visits came from the abuse of DFE. Since there's no solid way of tracking this data, those numbers are likely severely understated. Given how little the average member of the public knows about the dangers of DFE, it's no surprise that young people looking for a high, hear about the sense of euphoria that inhaling this chemical can give you, the low price and easy accessibility and see it as a natural choice.

Like so many things, I believe the answer here is education. SB 1032 requires labeling DFE to ensure that those purchasing the product are duly warned against improper use. It limits purchase of the product to adults and limits the amount that can be purchased. If you use DFE properly, a few cans will last a very long time. Joleen should still be here today. I dearly wish I could have met her. But what we can do here today is raise awareness of what this product can do and ensure that, while it can be used legitimately, clear barriers are set to stop improper use. Colleagues, let's do this for Joleen.

Thank you for your time and consideration.