

Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry;

My name is Roberta Manter and I live in Fayette. I am here to ask you to vote in favor of L.D. 125 and L.D. 316, which would prohibit certain uses of herbicides and pesticides. I will leave the statistics to those who have the numbers. I'm here to give you a personal story.

My family is known for living into their nineties. So when my husband David's parents and uncles all lived into their nineties, I was reassured we'd likely spend our "golden years" together.

Then David's best friend was diagnosed with lymphoma. At the time, there was little they could do for him beyond blood transfusions and morphine. He died when he was 42. A few years later, the owner of the orchard where David had worked for years was also diagnosed with lymphoma. It wasn't long before he was gone, too.

David had been feeling run-down and having abdominal pain and night sweats. His doctor ran some blood tests. Days later, the cancer center diagnosed stage 4 Non-Hodgkin lymphoma. My whole world came crashing in. David was only in his 50's. The oncologist said new treatments could keep lymphoma at bay and he'd most likely die of something else. (He didn't say that the "something else" would likely be something he would have survived if not for the lymphoma.)

Lymphoma patients now have a life expectancy of 5 to 20 years. After four chemo treatments, David has been in remission for eleven years now. His checkups have been good, but his blood counts never look normal. It's like living with a ticking time bomb. You hear stories of people who have a good checkup, but have a catastrophic relapse weeks later.

Glyphosate is now a known cause of lymphoma. David sprayed with Glyphosate and other pesticides and herbicides at the orchard for years before they knew the danger. No wonder both he and the owner of the orchard got lymphoma.

We've learned that chemo can have lingering consequences, including what they call "chemo brain." David graduated at the top of his high school class and was invited to go to MIT. Now he has trouble remembering things, and he's slower to process information. It's frustrating.

It's hard to tell whether his other symptoms are the result of lymphoma, chemo, or the pesticides and herbicides themselves, but in any case, we blame his long exposure to spray materials as the root cause. His immune system is not what it should be, so he tends to catch whatever's going around, and it takes him longer to recover. (Imagine how that makes us feel these days!) Also, he has nerve problems. Sometimes he has trouble feeling what he's doing - not a good thing for a mechanic. Other times he has excruciating pain, or feels like his skin is on fire.

We worry for our grandchildren. These chemicals are now in everything. Cheerios and Quaker Oats test particularly high. Is it any wonder these poisons are now commonly found in children's blood streams? This can lead to pediatric cancers, decreased cognitive function, and behavior problems. It's time we cleaned up our act, before it's too late for the next generation. Thank you for listening. Please vote in favor of this important legislation.