

Good Afternoon Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Kim Wilson, and I am here to provide testimony in support of LD 330.

My youngest son Grant Wilson, affectionately known by his nickname Trip, had just returned home from winter break in NYC with his girlfriend and father. I had been worried about him because he had been suffering from a painful sore throat all week. He had been tested for strep, which was negative and had been to the hospital twice the year before for tonsil issues. We had a scheduled Dr. appointment the following morning. Trip was only 16 but still my baby and as 2 older brothers had graduated high school and moved off to college I had been looking forward to having these 2 years or more to finally have one-on-one time with him at this age when he needed it most.

The morning after he arrived home, I was awakened at 5am by his friends screaming that something was wrong, I ran upstairs to find him motionless and not breathing. At that moment, I knew he was gone. 911 was called but my first thought was that his throat had swollen shut and he couldn't breathe. I was in shock thinking I should have taken him to the ER the previous night and as I made futile attempts at CPR I was told that he had taken liquid morphine. His girlfriend told me that when they stopped at a family home to get her car and use the bathroom that Trip had found some liquid morphine in a bathroom closet somewhere that had been somehow overlooked after this family member passed 3 years prior under hospice care.

I have yet to fathom how a vial of liquid morphine could have gone missing and unaccounted for and how a deadly opioid was not treated with the same precautions as a loaded gun which metaphorically is exactly what he found.

Last year Maine had 503 overdose deaths and 22 gun related deaths, yet there seems to be more stringent laws regarding gun safety than there are regarding prescription medications.

The statistics show clearly that accidental overdoses kill more people annually than gun related incidents yet it seems there is more attention given to gun safety laws than prescription drug containment laws. I believe the stricter regulations and precautions need to be in place for prescription drugs at all times and most especially for patients in palliative care to help prevent diversion and tragic accidents like Trip's.

We have not yet been able to have a memorial service because of COVID. It is a daily struggle trying to navigate my life now without him in it. I feel in some way for now I am memorializing him daily by spreading awareness and advocating for consistent home health care protocols through proper immediate disposal and more stringent monitoring and diversion control.

This year I should be looking forward to Trip's high school graduation and helping him prepare for what should have been a promising future....instead I have been reading countless articles and pages of statistics and convoluted laws addressing the nation's

opioid crisis with little to no solutions in sight. I can recall many conversations over the years with friends, some who are VNAs, hospice caregivers, social workers, police officers, EMTs, lawyers and recovering opioid addicts. I have heard too many stories specifically related to the tragic consequences of prescription medication left over after a hospice patient dies and how these medications are easily diverted. Sadly I now have my own personal story to tell.

I am just one of too many bereaved parents trying to make some sort of positive social change in the world to honor their child who has left this world too soon. I believe I can speak for any parent who has found their beloved child dead that is an image never forgotten. My son's death could have been prevented in many ways and my goal is to try and do anything I can to prevent such a tragedy from happening to another family because on the morning of February 22, 2020 I became an empty nester unexpectedly and horrifically. My life altered from now on and my family torn apart.

I respectfully understand the opposition to this bill and have heard similar arguments over the years. I am confident however that LD330 can incite discussion from this point on to heighten awareness and in some form, find common ground between home health care agencies and legislators by setting universal standards for monitoring and containment of prescription medications especially opioids. I have the utmost respect for home health care providers and the challenges they face daily as they comfort dying patients and grieving families. It is a noble profession but agreeably flawed. I will continue to advocate for change to honor my son and to advocate and hope for any mutually agreeable solutions to this particular pervasive issue at hand and one of many related to the ongoing opioid crisis.

I thank you all for your consideration and urge you to pass LD 330, and I thank Representative Lori Gramlich for spearheading my cause . Kim Wilson

Kim Welch Wilson
South Portland

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