

WRITTEN STATEMENT  
OF  
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**GRIEVING MOTHER OF SON, LOGAN RACHWAL, FOREVER 19  
CO-FOUNDER OF LOVE, LOGAN FOUNDATION, 501c3 NON-PROFIT**

BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT  
SURVEILLANCE  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**THE FENTANYL CRISIS IN AMERICA: INACTION IS NO LONGER AN OPTION**

**MARCH 1, 2023**

Dear Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify at this hearing and share our personal story as it relates to this topic.

*Why we are here*

My name is Erin Rachwal. My husband, Rick, and I are invested in this discussion because we are grieving parents walking through an unimaginable experience. We are the founders of the Love, Logan Foundation residing in Wisconsin. I am also a Licensed Clinical Therapist and have built a thriving private practice working with families and children in mental health. We are thankful you have provided us the opportunity to share our views that strongly support permanently scheduling Fentanyl-Related-Substances, (FRS) as a class – in the hopes that other parents and siblings will not have to suffer the needless and grievous loss of a child or loved one.

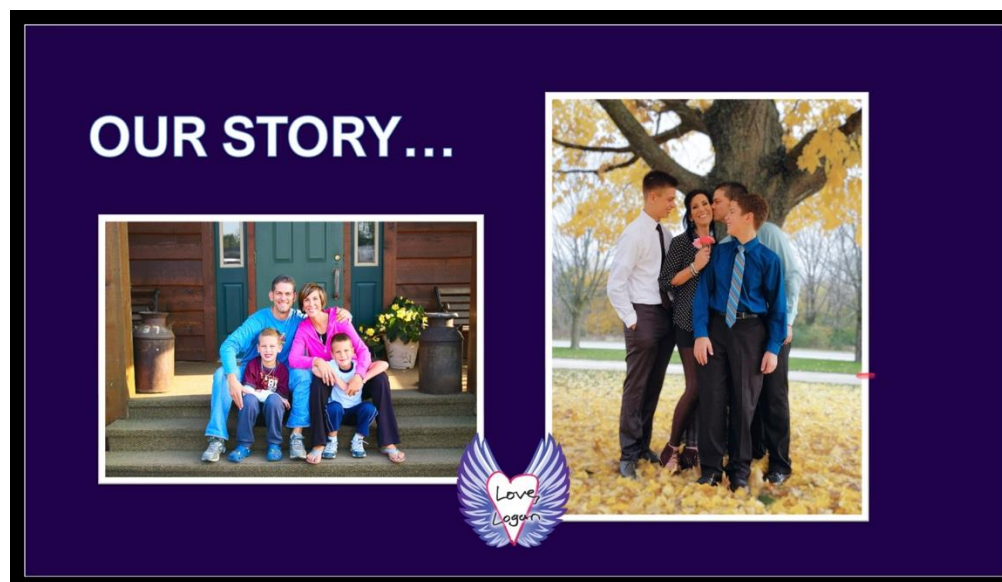
We recently established our 501c3 nonprofit organization after tragically losing our 19-year-old son, Logan, to a fake pill containing fentanyl. His toxicology report showed **three different forms of fentanyl** in his system. Even though my profession is focused on helping people in various areas of mental health, I didn't even know much about fentanyl poisoning or the severity or lethality of it until Logan's tragic death. Unfortunately, hundreds of other parents we have personally met who have lost children to this deadly poison were as unaware as we were.



*Fentanyl doesn't discriminate- Logan's story*

As a young boy, Logan was generally happy but did struggle with some anxiety. He found making friends extremely challenging and often felt like he was the one left out.

We had him in counseling very early on and throughout most of his life. He was always our boy who seemed to be sad, and we made countless attempts to help him. While he had his struggles, as many children do, Logan was also kind, caring, smart, and creative. He had a great sense of humor and would have done anything for anyone. He loved animals – especially his cats - and he played baseball for many years. Being a mom and having a family was the most important thing in the world to me. We raised our two boys in a nurturing and loving home. We vacationed, camped, celebrated birthdays, went to church, played sports, and spent quality time together. I tell you these things about our family and son to make the point that **NO** family is immune from this danger – it could happen to any family.



Logan went off to college in the fall of 2020 and tragically never finished out his freshman year. He had his whole life ahead of him. On Valentine's Day, 2021 we received the call that no parent ever wants to get. Logan was found dead in his dorm room at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee. The year prior (2019-2020), our relationship with Logan became very strained. Looking back, we are now able to piece together what was missing information to help us understand what was happening at that time. Logan was using pills to self-medicate for his anxiety and became irritable, dishonest, secretive, angry and extremely difficult to deal with.

There are no words to describe what it's like coping with a child who can technically make his own decisions at age 18, yet as a parent you see destruction and turmoil taking over. It is clear that at some point he was buying pills from friends and we will never really know when he may have crossed that invisible line of addiction. The availability of fake pills that are potent and driving addiction in young adults is far and

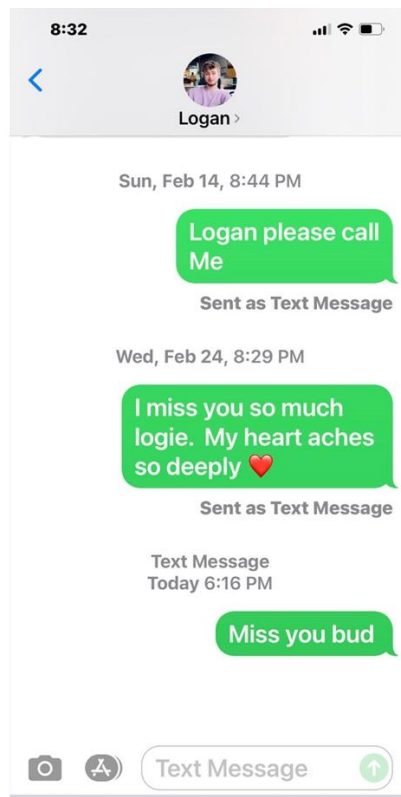
wide. I remember a recent conversation with a Wisconsin DEA Agent that sat down with us and said “that ship has sailed” regarding the drug cartels and numerous analogues / forms of pills that they are making and distributing all over the United States. Cartels are driving addiction – on purpose – for their business. Logan was being used to increase sales in their business and he didn’t even know it.



Once Logan’s first semester of college started in fall 2020, we were working very hard repairing the relationship with him. Logan was coming home for dinners, laundry, visits, etc. Things felt better; not perfect, but much better. For the first time in a long time, I was a mom with hope. Covid prohibited a few planned visits and celebrations over the holidays that year. The day before Valentine’s Day, Logan texted us both and said “Hey Mom and Dad, Happy Saturday! I just wanted to say I love you and I am at work”. We both replied to him that day unbeknownst to us, that would be the last time we would ever “speak” to our 19-year-old son.

The following evening, Valentine’s Day, at 8:37 pm, I received a phone call from Logan’s best friend. He was frantically telling me to call the University Police Dept. I attempted to call and text Logan from my cell at 8:44 pm immediately with no answer or reply. It was at this point I knew in my gut that something was terribly wrong – I looked at my husband and said, “he’s gone, I can feel it”. The connection a mom has to her child is like no other. My body could actually *feel* his absence. We called our other son home and the three of us drove down to the university with no additional information

other than a few social media posts that all seemed to point to his (possible) death. Walking into the police station in the same building Logan's dorm was is a memory I will never forget. I was physically holding my other son up so he didn't collapse on the ground. The gripping fear and pain was the most indescribable thing I have ever been through. Logan was gone. They told us he was found an hour prior, by a friend, laying in his lofted bed. It was estimated that he had been laying there for at least 12 hours. He had taken a pill while over Face Time with his girlfriend around 7:30 am earlier that morning. She told the police that within he "started snoring and fell asleep". The three of us went up to the 11<sup>th</sup> floor to his dorm room to see him that night. I can't put into words the guttural pain and emotion I felt when looking at him in his bed, his right arm half red and half blue and knowing I would NEVER see him again.





### The aftermath of an untimely death

As invested parents, you never expect to be burying your child. This untimely death brings up significant, life-long losses. Loss of the past, loss of the present and what would be, and loss of the future. We often wonder what Logan would have accomplished in his life. Would he have had a family? Children? Would we have been grandparents? So many unfinished details of a life gone way too soon.

Logan leaves behind a younger brother, Caden, who now experiences daily battles of depression and side effects from seeing his family broken and forever changed. Having lost the 4<sup>th</sup> family member is like a table leg being broken off and trying to still eat and use the table as if. Losing our child, and a brother, to this poison, was like a bomb going off in the middle of everything we had built our life around – this explosion killed our oldest son; Caden’s only brother. The aftermath of a completely unexpected and devastating death like this is unexplainable until you experience it. This bomb – the weapon – FENTANYL.

Three months later, we received a phone call with the results of the toxicology report only to find out that Logan had **THREE different forms of fentanyl** in his system. Logan was murdered – poisoned. He *thought* he had bought a “perc 30” and instead received a fake pill, made to look real, containing fentanyl and it killed him - instantly.



### Why this is important

Through our grieving process over the past 2 years, we have realized the impact of the loss of a child will never go away. Two weeks ago, marked two years since Logan's death. We find ourselves still in shock, still pushing through each day, breaking down unexpectedly. But this grief has given us a deeper compassion for others and especially for those suffering from losing a child to fentanyl poisoning. We are not only representing Logan's tragic death, rather every family across this nation suffering from being a victim of a horrible crime related to Fentanyl.

Our pain reminds us of the need to confront the growing threat of fentanyl from every angle in our country. According to the DEA, Fentanyl is now the leading cause of death in the U.S. for people ages 18-45. These are the ages when our young adults should be thriving and excelling, but instead, thousands of them are dying in increasing numbers. Death leaves no opportunity to recover – these kids aren't able to learn from their mistakes. Logan isn't here to learn from his mistakes because fentanyl took that opportunity away from him. We have connected with families all over the country through our devastation. Through this trauma and loss, we have learned that coming together is a powerful way to change laws and take political action against those who are killing our children.

#### Temporary scheduling of FRS

The temporary scheduling of Fentanyl Related Substances (FRS) has shown to deter the creation of new FRS's which is one clear avenue protecting our country. Therefore, we know the **permanent** scheduling of Fentanyl Related Substances is a **solid** shield we have to fight the fentanyl crisis. If you are questioning whether this bill should be passed, I'd ask **how can you focus on the theoretical rights of criminals over the rights of our children?** Children just like my son Logan.

#### Permanent scheduling of FRS

Permanent scheduling symbolizes a proactive and bi-partisan approach to this crisis. **"United we Stand, divided we fall"** is a phrase that has been used for hundreds of years to inspire unity and collaboration. It's core concept lies in the collectivist notion, that if individual members of a group work on their own instead of together, they are doomed to fail and will all be defeated. **Do you believe in any way that our country is being defeated by this poison developed in Chinese and cartel labs?**

To connect with a young adult Logan's age, most parents simply go to dinner, visit, text, call, FaceTime, vacation or spend time on Holidays together. Well, to connect with our son Logan, we have to look at a sunset, a rainbow, a picture, listen to a song, wear his



sweatshirt or keep his thumbprint necklace around our neck. This is what Fentanyl does. It changes everything; our past, our present and our future. Our family's story – Logan's story - is just one of **tens of thousands** that have occurred and will keep occurring if we do not take action to slow down and ultimately stop the flood of this deadly poison. We hope by sharing our experience we can give meaning to Logan's untimely loss and – in honor of his life – leave a significant legacy to protect other families from this tragedy.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to tell our story.

Erin Rachwal, MSW, LCSW  
Logan's mom



Logan Case number 21-01270



**NEVER SAY "NOT MY CHILD"**



**#FentanylPoisoning**



**#OnePillCanKill**