

March 19, 2019

To our elected officials,

We are families who have lost loved ones to counterfeit pills made with fentanyl. Pills like these are made with illegal pill presses both in the United States and outside the U.S., often beyond the reach of our nation's law enforcement.

As we have come forward to tell our story in the hopes of warning other families like ours, we have met more families with losses like ours. A problem this serious should be getting better, not worse, and given the recent reports about counterfeit pills [spreading to 46 states](#), the problem is not getting better.

The problem is worsening despite the valiant efforts of law enforcement at every level in our country. These heroes include:

- the DEA Special Agents that arrested Dr. Johnny Benjamin Jr in Vero Beach, CA who made deadly fakes with a pill press and fentanyl he obtained from China;
- the heroes of U.S. Customs and Border Patrol and the Food and Drug Administration that somehow find counterfeit pills and pill presses broken into pieces and sent in separate packages; and
- [the Davidson County, NC sheriff's deputy that followed a lead into the woods to find a remote pill pressing operation.](#)

Our law enforcement is working harder than ever to remove these devices from circulation but they can only reach those in the U.S. and the rest of the world has plenty of counterfeiters making these products and sending them into America.

Sadly, many of us have never learned the source of the illegal pill press that helped take the life of our loved one.

We are not policy experts, we are American families. This report you hold from three leading organizations on this issue suggests that America does not yet have a handle on the pill press crisis.

We don't know if one solution to the problem of illegal pill presses is better than another, but we know this: while our leaders figure this out, Americans are getting hurt. We hope you feel the urgency created by our grief and concern and act.

We hope that your actions mean that no other family ever experience this same loss we have.

Gratefully,

Rachel Blado, Nashville Tennessee, mother of Joshua Holton
Lisa Hicks, Atlanta Georgia, mother of Joe Patterson

Jennifer Hodge, Atlanta Georgia, mother of Robbie Hodge
Carrie L. Luther, Santa Cruz California, mother of Tosh Ackerman
Andrea Thomas, Grand Junction, Colorado mother of Ashley Romero
Caroline Sbarbaro, Hawthorne New Jersey, sister to Maggie Crowley
Kristen DiVita, Hawthorne New Jersey, Sister to Maggie Crowley
Joseph DiVita, Fair Lawn New Jersey, Brother to Maggie Crowley
Marnie DiVita, Fair Lawn New Jersey, Mother to Maggie Crowley
Joseph DiVita, Fair Lawn New Jersey, Father to Maggie Crowley
Tara DiVita, Fair Lawn New Jersey, Sister in law to Maggie Crowley
John Sterople, Hawthorne New Jersey, Brother in law to Maggie Crowley