

January 25th, 2024

Honorable members of the House Corrections & Juvenile Justice Committee,

When your family member struggles with addiction, you never sleep well. Instead, you stay up late wondering where they are and if they're safe. You wonder if today will be the day they finally decide to get sober—or if today might be the day you get notified that they've died. It's always in the back of your mind. So many of us know what it's like to hope against hope that they'll overcome the disease of addiction. And so many of us know what it's like to get the devastating news that they've died.

Two years ago, my husband got that call. On the other end of the line was news that his little brother had died of an overdose. He was just 33 years old. Matt, a carpenter and former college football star, was found cold and alone on the ground, outside a garage where a small group of unhoused people had been staying. No one called 911 that night. Instead, they fled. By the time Matt was found, he'd been alone and dead for hours. Matthew Alan Lies was not a perfect person by any means, but he didn't deserve to die alone on that cold street.

If this bill were the law two years ago, I believe that Matt's companions would have called for help instead of running. In that scenario, he would probably still be alive today.

In honor of Matt and the many others like him who struggle with addiction, I'm asking for your support for the Good Samaritan bill. The disease of addiction continues to devastate so many families in Kansas—and we need commonsense solutions that incentivize people to do the right thing when they see that someone has overdosed. I believe this bill does exactly that. If you choose to support this bill, I believe it will lead to the preservation of many lives.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

With best regards,

Sapphire Garcia-Lies
Wichita Kansas