

Bruce Testimony before House Business Committee, Kansas, Jan. 25, 2024

My name is Bruce Brown.

I am a resident of Clear Creek County, Colorado, just west of Denver.

Thank you for allowing me to testify on HB24-2676, an important bill that creates a framework to help reduce suicides that all too often are encouraged through internet communications.

Recently, I was contacted by Rep. Poskins and asked to tell my family's story.

In August 2022, I took my last road trip with my seventeen-year-old son, Bennett, just before he was leaving for college.

Honestly, he was not enthusiastic about the several hour drive from Colorado through Kansas to see a Royals game in 105-degree heat, but I will forever remember him at first nervously behind the wheel of the car, helping me drive .... Then as miles turned, more confident, as I could see him growing into the man, I knew he would become.

In one of those moments, that makes a Dad happiest, I remember after the trip him remarking that although he didn't really want to go, he had a great time and was very thankful.

Just five months later, Bennett died from a Sodium Nitrite (pure form) poisoning, self-inflicted, at age 17.

Just weeks ago, would have been his 19<sup>th</sup> b-day.

A funny, loving kid, smart as a whip, deft on a soccer field. I miss him every day.

While Bennett was wonderful, he also suffered from long covid, and isolating himself from his peers took a toll.

On the internet he found encouragement to take a poison that could ease his pain and ordered SN from an out-of-state sportman's supply store for \$13.99.

Had he not been prodded by an internet full of grim reapers to access a 'quick, painless, and easy' death and relief from his pain, he would be alive today.

After grief filled months, I wondered, “What if we could prevent this post-suicide suffering for other families who otherwise might lose a loved one to suicide? I started connecting with other families, from England to New York and eventually even to your Kansas neighbors in Lenexa.

I reached out to my Colorado Assembly representatives, and we began to discuss ways in which we could prevent the suffering by so many.... families of dozens of dead brothers, sons and daughters.

I researched, talked to everyone ‘in the know’, read science articles, news articles, appeared on TV with one goal in mind – stop suicides.

And Bennetts of this world, will live long enough to cry for help and be saved. That is all I am asking.

Laws which impose consequences on people who would encourage other people to take their lives will be another pro-active step the direction the single most important piece of legislation to address this out-of-control death by poison.

Just Tuesday, the bill brought in Colorado to take sodium nitrite (pure) out of the hands of consumers, passed the House on a bipartisan 60-4 vote. I am hopeful that this bill will next pass in the Colorado Senate.

Here, I want to express my gratitude to Representatives Poskin and Landwehr for bringing HB24-2676.

In advance of your votes in this body, I want to thank you as well for using your power to save lives and taking the lead to hold accountable grim reapers who arrogantly think they can help determine who should live, and who should die.