

Mr. Robert Detamore
Sponsor Testimony
House Bill 146

Chair Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of House Bill 146.

My name is Robert Detamore. In May of 2014, an extremely drunk driver hit my daughter; and she died 11 days after the car accident without ever regaining consciousness. We, the victim's family, never received our day in court. We never heard the testimony from the eyewitness; and we never heard from either Dr. Somerset, the forensic pathologist who examined my daughter's body almost three years ago, or the original coroner, Dr. Jan Gorniak who certified the original death certificate. Today, both Doctors Somerset and Gorniak stand by the original cause of death listed on the certificate: blunt force trauma to the head due to a motor vehicle collision.

In early January of this year--2 and 1/2 years after my daughter's death--her family received a revised death certificate in the mail with no explanation, no letter, nothing. **THIS** death certificate changed the cause of death to melanoma, and the manner in which my daughter died was now listed as NATURAL. On January 12, 2017 the prosecutors confirmed that the original death certificate from May 2014 had been changed--and because of that change--the prosecutors no longer had a homicide case against the drunk driver. My daughter had 1 to 1 and 1/2 years of life remaining before cancer would take her life. The drunk driver robbed our family's last months with her, but he can no longer be charged with vehicular homicide.

House Bill 146 will help to create the much-needed accountability for coroners to appear before a judge prior to changing a death certificate. Thank you for your time and consideration.