

Thank you all for hearing us speak today, and for listening to our stories. My name is Christina Alcorn, and my son was Aspen Runnels, the namesake of this proposed law. Aspen was hit by a pickup truck last year in front of his school. The driver was speeding in a school zone and messing with her baby's pacifier instead of watching the road. My son was crossing in the crosswalk, with the lights flashing. She didn't see any of this. She did not attempt to stop and hit him full force going an estimated 30-35 mph. He spent a total of 10 days in the ICU but was declared brain dead on day 8. We sat at his bedside for an additional 2 days until we could find matches for his organs.

I probably don't need to tell you what sitting in a room like that for 10 days feels like to a mother. I am in the medical field, so I had a fairly good idea the day he was hit what the outcome would be. The last time I saw my son, we walked down a long hallway, lined with staff and family members to the OR where Aspen would undergo a final surgery to donate his organs.

It's appropriate that this hearing be held on this day, May 14th. On this day last year, I heard my son say I love you for the last time. I saw his eyes open and we had the last talk we would ever have. May 15th was his accident.

It was several weeks after this occurred when I got a phone call from the Butler County Sheriff's Office. They informed me that their investigation was complete, and that the charge for the woman who hit him, Kaitlyn Hyde, was going to be vehicular homicide. The officer informed me that this would likely be charged as a misdemeanor offense. I was completely shocked. Surely killing a child while distracted driving would be considered a felony charge. After all, hitting someone in a construction zone is an automatic felony, why would it not be the same for children? The prosecutor met with us and explained how Ohio law is interpreted for this offense, and she did go in front of a grand jury hoping for a felony charge. Unfortunately, she told me the way the law is written, the only way to charge this offense given the circumstances was a misdemeanor. This is when I embarked on a journey, along with Trisha Parnell, to get the law changed.

Our logic behind drafting this law is that construction workers are trained in safety, wear safety equipment, and are compensated for choosing to be on their work site, knowing the dangers involved. Yet, hitting someone in a construction zone holds more weight under the law than killing a child, just trying to go to and from school. Part of the reason Kaitlyn Hyde was charged with a misdemeanor and spent only 30 days in jail is because she was not intoxicated or, by her admission, on her phone. These actions would have elevated the charge to driving recklessly, and therefore a felony. I believe speeding and distracted driving of any sort in a school zone should be considered reckless, and therefore a felony. Any reckless action that takes a child from their parents and robs them of a future deserves a

punishment that fits the crime. Kaitlyn Hyde got to spend the holidays with her children before her sentence, which we did not object to. She gets to see her kids grow up, see them go to prom, and graduate high school. These are things Aspen will never get to experience, and we will never get to see.

Aspen was a beautiful soul, always smiling and laughing. He was one of the few truly kind people I've ever met. He held the doors for strangers and would tell them to have a nice day. He walked his friends home from school to keep them safe from bullying. One of his teachers told me that even when other kids were mean to him, he was nice back. To have lost this beautiful person is a travesty, and justice was not served. Not for us, and certainly not for Aspen. We hope with this bill, it will deter drivers from speeding and driving recklessly in school zones, but we also hope that the next family who is unlucky enough to suffer a loss like this at least feels justice. Thank you.