



*Quality Care, Close To Home*

February 9, 2021

Good afternoon Senator Dolan,

I was asked to submit the attached Witness Form to you along with a bit of my story, and why I am advocating for Bill Number SB30, and the desire of my heart to see August 31<sup>st</sup> recognized as Ohio's Overdose Awareness Day, and in conjunction with that, lowering the flags in the state to half-staff.

My story, I am sure, mimics thousands of other parents in Ohio and the United States. I lost my 25-year-old son to a drug overdose on Nov 12, 2016. With that event, my life and my heart changed forever.

The positive that came from it, is that my husband and I began sharing "Joey's Story" in schools, civic organizations, rehabilitation facilities, medical conferences, churches, just to name a few.

Our purpose was to educate those in attendance on the disease of addiction, and how this disease knows no boundaries, can afflict anyone, and we must do all we can to end the stigma associated with this disease, and those who struggle with it.

We also went on to co-found, Bellevue Recovery and Support Services, which offers assistance to detox, rehab, and/or recovery housing for those struggling with substance use.

**We also offer support to their families/loved ones, as they too struggle with what to do.**

<https://bellevuerecovery.org/contact/>

I certainly realize that the United States is in the midst of two health care crises. First is the pandemic that has claimed over 100,000 lives in the U.S., and the second is the opioid epidemic that kills about 50,000 each year. Unfortunately when COVID-19 hit, it had and continues to have a major impact on those struggling with substance use, as many of the "in person" support meetings were closed, people were faced to stay home, causing isolation to those individuals who desperately need in person interaction.

I believe dedicating a day to honor and remember those who have fought, and continue to fight this disease will send a message that they are valued, and that overdose death is preventable.

I appreciate your time, and I stand in full support of Bill SB30.

Thank you,

**Lavin Schwan**  
**Executive Assistant**  
**Mr. Timothy Buit, CEO**  
**Ms. Carrie Condon, CFO**