

**Laura Seger**  
**Testimony Supporting House Bill 37**  
**Criminal Justice Committee**  
**March 21, 2023**

Thank you Madam Chair and members of the committee for allowing MADD the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 37. My name is Laura Seger and I am the proud mother of Joey Seger. Joey was just 18 years old and had just started his senior year of high school in 2010. My Joey was 6'3, 320 pounds of the biggest gentle giant. September 20th was a Monday night where Joey spent that evening with his family. His mom, his dad whom he called Buddy, and his little brother and closest friend Brian Seger who was just sixteen. We spent the evening watching television together and watching Joey's favorite television show Swamp People. Joey asked to go to the farm science review the next day with his friends. All Joey needed to graduate was his English class and he was taking Machine Trades at JVS because he wanted to grow up to be just like his dad, a machinist. I signed Joey's permission slip to go and I signed Brian's permission slip as well. My boys loved demolition derby cars, demolition derby garden tractors, and anything with a motor they could build up and tear up they loved. I wanted Joey to enjoy his senior year of high school because he had worked so hard to get there. I'm a nurse and at that time I had a job where I had to get up at 3am. I gave my boys hugs and kisses and told them goodnight. Joey said, I love you mom, and I went to bed. Little did I know that my life was about to be turned upside down. Little did I know that Monday night was the last time I would talk to Joey, spent time with Joey, and make another memory with Joey.

On September 21st, another friend wanted to go to the farm science review and there was not enough room in the truck for all the boys, not enough seat belts. Joey decided to stay home and let his little brother go. My husband was laid off of work at that time, so he and Joey decided to go to a friend's house in Dayton to pick up a riding lawn mower, that Joey would have turned into a 2000-pound beast for the next demolition derby. My family was almost home, just 4 miles from home, when a woman named Leann had gone to Meijer's in Troy and bought a six-pack of compressed air, sat in the parking lot and huffed an entire can, and then deemed herself okay to drive. She was not, she was under the influence of an inhalant, and she was high. Leann went off the right side of the roadway on-State Route 718 in Miami County, came back on the roadway, and went left of center. She had a "tattle tale" box in her vehicle that indicated no braking 5 seconds

before the crash, and she was still accelerating 3 seconds before impact. My son Joey was the driver of his Dodge Dakota Sport pickup truck, and his dad was the passenger. Ron remembers yelling look out and Joey drove his truck into the ditch to try to miss her. Leann hit them at 78 plus miles an hour head-on in the ditch driver to driver. She hit Joey behind the front driver's wheel and drove her truck through my son's truck tearing the cab and bed off the frame, standing it in an L shape, and a piece of wreckage cut Joey's seatbelt. He was ejected out the back window of his truck where he broke his neck and died. I didn't get to go to the crash scene to say goodbye, there was no hospital where I could say goodbye, Joey was gone. On Joey's way out of the vehicle, he collided with his dad inside the cab of the truck causing a c2 and c3 neck fracture, broken ribs, lacerated spleen, and other lacerations. Joey's dad has never fully recovered from this traumatic event and has not returned to work to this day. In the 10 seconds, it took from contact with Joey's truck and all of the damage and death to be done, I am a grieving mother till the day I die because there is no getting over the loss of a child. I am also head of the household and work two jobs to provide for my family. I also am trying to replace and build retirement because anything that was saved or earned is now gone.

I had to tell Brian about the crash and the death of his big brother. I will never forget Brian asking me, I don't have a big brother anymore. I told him, no baby you don't. Leann gave my family a life sentence we did not ask for. It is true that crashes happen, and life does go on, but for those of us left behind from this violent crime, life is never the same again. All those that knew Joey, his family and friends, law enforcement, first responders, the funeral home, and the community was impacted by the loss of Joey and the tragic and violent way he died.

Leann was released on an OR bond and overdosed and died three months after the crash from excessive inhalant and Methadone. She was going to be charged with an F1 and F2, but unfortunately, a judge and attorney met behind closed doors and arranged the OR bond which gave Leann her freedom to go home and hug her entire family, but I never get to do that again.

This crash was 100 percent preventable. She could have bought her inhalants, taken them home which was a 10-minute drive, and done this in her home. Instead, she decided to drive impaired. The general public knows the dangers of impaired driving, education is out there, and we see it on television daily. We need to work together to make everyone understand that getting an OVI is not an acceptable social event but a serious crime with stiff penalties and punishment. There should not be repeat offenders with

three, four, or fifteen OVI's. We have to work together to change the way people think about impaired driving and the consequences that will occur. It has been 12 years since my son, Joey was tragically and violently killed due to an impaired driver. I wonder what he would be doing today if he was alive. He would have been 32 years old this October 22nd. Would Joey be married? Would he have children? What would he have done for his community? I also wonder why my son and why anybody should die from this 100% preventable crime.

The lasting effects from this crash is the permanent loss of my son Joey and that he did not get a chance to live his life to the fullest, my son Brian is engaged and when he gets married, his brother will not be standing with him, there is always an empty chair where Joey should be enjoying his life, living, and loving. Due to the actions of another due to impaired driving, he was robbed of his life at the age of 18.

I cannot put into words the total effect because there is no way to describe the pain, as Joey's mom, that I feel daily that my son will never walk through the door again and say Hi mom, or say I love you mom. How would you describe your life if you lost someone to this violent and preventable crime? We have the chance to make changes to prevent impaired driving. It takes all of us to make changes to save lives and prevent further stories, like my Joey.

I urge you to pass House Bill 37.

Thank you.