

Mr. Chair and members, my name is Heather Bacchus and I am here as a private citizen on behalf of parents of precious youth in Minnesota that deserve better.

I am the mom of a 21-year-old son who died by suicide after becoming psychotic from using high-potency THC products.

His habit began at 15; looking for social acceptance. Although illegal, it was easily accessible.

At 16, our son Randy was diagnosed with a Cannabis Use Disorder suffering from anxiety and depression and attended wilderness therapy.

At 18, he moved to a legal use state, CO. Misled by an industry that profits from addiction, he believed that THC was good for him. In reality, it damaged his adolescent brain.

Eventually, his use led to cannabis-induced psychosis, suicidal ideation, and completed suicide.

Sadly, He took his life in July 2021.

According to NIDA, 35.7% of 12th graders have said that they used marijuana.

Daily use among 8th and 10th graders has increased since 2017.

Research suggests high-potency daily marijuana use may increase the chance of developing psychosis by 5 times and those who use marijuana are 7.5 times more likely to complete suicide.

Since legalization in Colorado, the number of suicides testing positive for THC has tripled and more youth die by suicide with THC in their system than with alcohol.

Three factors contribute to marijuana dependence, depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and psychosis: the age of onset of use, the frequency, and the potency. How are you going to keep high-potency products away from adolescents to keep them safe?

There are more than 20,000 studies documenting the dangers of Cannabis that Minnesota and the industry have decided to ignore to profit from addiction.

Read medical journals and research the real dangers of this drug.

This is not the weak weed you grew up with. Today's THC/Cannabis/Marijuana is much more potent; with levels up to 95% THC in concentrates.

It is no longer just a flower, it is a designer, synthetic drug backed by an industry looking to profit off addiction.

It is unsafe for our public.

Have courage and make decisions with your heart and your mind regarding the future of our society.

Stop thinking along political lines, influenced by money.

Our son is gone, so I am not here on his behalf. I am here on behalf of your kids, grandkids, and our precious youth of today.

Continue to decriminalize, expunge past criminal records, and educate people on the real dangers of today's marijuana, but do not legalize and commercialize this psychoactive drug.