Hi,

My name is Jamie Langston. It saddens me deeply that I could not be here in person today because this matter is near and dear to my heart. As I write this letter, it's become clear that I could not have stood before you and kept my emotions in check.

I want to tell you the story of how I lost my 17-year-old son.

Jaden was a kindhearted kid from early on. He hated being late to school; he loved school, football, fishing, and riding four-wheelers. He was a happy kid, always a mama's boy. I'm a single mother; his father was never in his life. But everything changed during his first year of high school when he fell into the wrong crowd of older kids. He changed from my beautiful, sweet boy to someone I didn't recognize.

I am a Regional Director, and I travel for work every week. His older brother took care of him when I was away. I started saving up to buy him a car when he was seven. When he turned 16, he got his car, and the trouble began. I can't recall how often I was woken up in the middle of the night because the police had picked him up. He was a minor, so they never kept him. He was out of control. I knew I had to get him help and away from his friends. That's when I was introduced to Stephanie Morcom. She and I must have spoken to dozens of facilities. I was either not rich enough or not poor enough. Finally, a police officer told me that once he turned 18, he would go to jail and be sent to court-ordered rehab.

Sadly, Jaden overdosed nine days after graduation and ten days before his 18th birthday. An adult gave my 17-year boy something laced with fentanyl. I have so many regrets. I should have mortgaged my home or moved away, but without his brother and my sister, I wouldn't be able to do my job and leave him unattended. Maybe I should have quit my job, but I'm the sole supporter and could not make enough money at a regular job to support my family. I never wanted him to think we were poor.

I would die for two things in this world, and that's my two boys. I failed Jaden, and so did the State of Oklahoma. It was tedious and frustrating to beg for help only to be denied call after call. We even began to look outside our State, but he wasn't a resident, so we were turned away again. Texas had adolescent programs (for Texans). I couldn't understand why the State I've called home my whole life didn't have the same.

I know I'm not alone in this, and it's too late for my child, but maybe we can save another mother from the brutal pain of losing a child. I know my son made bad choices, but he did not deserve to die. He needed help. He was a good kid, a straight-A student that got mixed up with the wrong crowd. Jaden was so protective of me, and I failed to protect him in the end. I'm confident that he would still be here today if he had gotten the help he needed. He was smart; he could have gone to college or the military, both of which he was considering.

Now he's gone, and I wish I could go with him because this pain is brutal. I can't eat or sleep and go through the motions. I need a purpose; maybe this is it. I want to raise awareness about fentanyl, so I will speak at the High School when I'm strong enough. I am inspired by what Stephanie Morcom is doing for the families in the State of Oklahoma. She has dedicated her life and won't stop until our Oklahoma kids get the help they need. They are our future and shouldn't be defined by the mistakes they make as a child. They are NOT lost causes. There should be programs all over Oklahoma to help them overcome their demons and grow up to be productive adults with a family of their own.

Thank you for listening to my story. I hope we find a way to protect our kids because drugs are becoming more dangerous than ever before.

In loving memory of Jaden Langston,

Jamie Langston