

Legislators' speech  
For tricky  
By: Drew Hollister

Good afternoon, my name is Drew Hollister, and I am here on behalf of the Hilgardner family. Tristen is one of the faces you see out there who was a victim of fentanyl. Tristen was my best friend. At a high school summer camp, I first met tricky in the 9th grade. Tristen was new to our school as the district borders were changed. So he was the new kid on the block. I remember meeting him that day, He was wearing an NFL-themed Batman jersey then the next day an All-star Odell jersey. I and the rest of my friends were kind and welcomed Tristen into our group. Ever since that day Tristen turned into Tricky. I can sit here and tell you all the great stories and the funniest moments I had with him. But I won't...ill instead talk about how I lost a friend. I saw tricky go from being a teenager playing video games every night with me to not knowing who he was anymore. Tricky went from possibly chasing a dream of joining our military to chasing the next high. I saw my friend slowly sell all his items and go from job to job trying to get money to cover him for the next high. Soon I never see tricky online or wanting to play basketball with me anymore because he had something to do he would say. He slowly began to lose his humanity. I remember the last time I saw Tricky. It was at a holiday gas station tricky was to work the night shift. A couple of buddies and I were bored on a Friday night, and we needed someone to brighten our mood. So who else then Tristen Hilgardner. Little did we know that night it was trickys call for help. We caught him aiding his addiction on the bathroom floor. On the bathroom floor... We knew this was serious and we had a quick conversation making sure he got the right help he needed. We figured out that he was on his way to treatment at a rehab center in 2 weeks. We were pleased to hear that as we didn't know what to do and a professional would. We spent the next 30 minutes or so laughing together, exchanging stories, And hitting an occasional griddy together. Justin Jefferson was Tricky favorite player and took after his griddy celebration..... December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021, a Friday morning. I

woke up to the crying wale of my mom telling me my best friend had just died. Just 1 week away from rehab... That morning wasn't even real to me. Felt like I was dreaming, and it would all be over soon. My Friends couldn't believe it as we all stared at our phones in disbelief. We as a group didn't know what to do. We decided to clean off baileys arbor basketball court as that was Tricky court as he and we would like to say. We Played a quick pick-up game as that's what would Tricky would want from us. Someone had extra NFL patriots sock that he left at someone's house after a sleepover from years pervious. We decided to tie the sock onto the fence and it still sits there today. Ill occasionally drive past it to see if it's still hanging. But Here I am on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021, grieving a loss of a friend not knowing what I could have done to prevent this. I was only his friend, I could never imagine the pain and suffering moms dads sisters brothers loved ones feel. I am not saying I do not feel their pain. I am saying I only have gotten to see mere fractions of my friend turned into ashes. Many families and loved ones wonder what they could have done to prevent fentanyl overdoses. Even I sit here today not knowing what steps I could have done to save my friend. I think about this daily and my hope ONE day is to say you... the government. Please put the trust back into Cities, homes, family so they know that they can rely on you to help save their child from making that same mistake on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 on a Friday morning. We as a state have seen a 44% increase in opioids and fentanyl deaths in 2 years per our own MN department of health. When will it stop. What else do you need to hear, what else do you need to wait for, what else do you want from the people? When will you stop seeing young faces outsides these doors wishing that there was more help and prevention. In honor of tricky and the families here today I hope our government makes the right decision. Thanks for your time god bless