

February 14, 2011

Chairman and members of the committee:

My name is Rhema Metell. I am Joshua Metell's younger sister. Joshua was an amazing man with such a promising future ahead of him. One whose teaching skills are still remembered among children, parents, and other teachers. He had an amazing influence on children so much so that after he passed one of his previous 1st grade students was crying uncontrollably. I asked her what was wrong but she had a hard time uttering the words, "I miss Mr. Metell." My heart broke for her and I was brought to the sorrowful remembrance of this horrific tragedy.

This tragedy not only affects friends and family it also affects the precious students he had touched during his three years of teaching, as well as the parents and staff he was surrounded by. During the month of July we held a basketball tournament which was sparked by Josh who wanted to do something positive in the community. At this event a previous student of his was present and saw his picture. She walked right up to the picture and said, "That was my teacher. He was my favorite teacher." It brought back the many wonderful memories I had of Josh directing and guiding his students.

When Josh passed away the school as a whole was devastated. They had grief counselors available for students and staff. He was not just any teacher; he was well respected and liked. During his memorial the school closed after a half day to enable the teachers, children and parents he worked with to attend. It is not common to have a male teacher working at the early elementary level. Many of these children lacked male role models in their lives and therefore clung to Mr. Metell for support and guidance.

I am always so proud to hear that he is spoken of often; his fellow teachers remember his humor, his amazing organization, his positive attitude, and the stand he would make for something that was right. I was so privileged to call him my mentor, friend and brother.

I am saddened to see that the man who was blocking the road at the time of the crash remained on the road with a suspended license. Josh was the only person with the legal right to be on the road that day. In March of 2009 my mother and I witnessed David pulling out of his driveway as we were passing it, this almost resulted in another crash. He then proceeded, once we passed, to leave his driveway again after the close call.

I often speak to people about who my brother was and express the deep agony that I still feel. It has been almost three years and it is harder than ever. I feel as though the numbness has worn away and now I am faced with the reality that my brother is gone forever. Nothing will ever bring Josh back, which is absolutely devastating to accept.

Throughout this painful time my family has been left with a feeling of not only grief but frustration. After meeting with the state prosecutor and the state police who had worked many hard hours on this case involving David Vertefeuille, we left both offices hearing the same thing, "We cannot do anything more because of the way the law is written." We wanted clarification; we wanted to

understand why the maximum sentence this man who repeatedly broke the law could face was a year in prison even after his choice to blatantly disobey the law took the life of my brother. He only received 8 months of prison time. He served 5 months in prison and 3 months on house arrest. My family is here today to try to prevent others from experiencing the same frustration and pain we have faced. This will be accomplished by passing the bills 6142 and 6143.

Respectfully,

Rhema Metell