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The Opioid Crisis in America

In an interview with The Courier-Journal, Ms. Walden recalled the incident of the death of her son, T.J. She told that he had become addicted to OxyContin, a painkiller prescribed to him after an accident at the age of eleven. He was unable to shake off its addiction which ultimately resulted in his death at a very young age of twenty-one. After the incident, Ms. Walden formed a union called Fed Up, which holds the major drug companies for the death of over forty thousand people (Report). There has been use of murky tactics from the drug companies as they tried to prevent the trials in Ohio by paying compensation, still, there are around three thousand unresolved lawsuits that are estimated to cost around fifty billion dollars in settlement to these companies. Ms. Walden says in her interview that the aforementioned compensation is not her goal. She equates the above situation as murders and simply wants justice for her son and forty thousand others. The question here is simple and yet difficult at the same time. Is this Ms. Walden's vendetta or should drug-making factories and their distributors be prosecuted for their role as (sort of) legalized commercial drug peddlers?

Needless to say, this is an argument that is based on the perception of the thinker in question. There is a division among the public regarding the issue. Many thinks that the it is likely that the drug companies are misguided to the aftereffects of the drug they sell as medicine for curing disease and pain. At least that is the view of Charles Fain Lehman of National Review thinks. Furthermore, the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) blames the imported medicines that are smuggled from China via Mexico, containing illegal drugs like fentanyl and heroin. This is no doubt a reaction to the sudden hike in prices of US-manufactured opioids as medicine in US is already too expensive for an ordinary citizen to afford without any subscription to any sort of medical insurance policy.

Nevertheless, many like Barry Meier, are still of the opinion that this problem requires some strict judicial action rather than a bunch of out-of-court settlements. In his article in The Times, Mr. Meier writes that instead of taking money, the government should strictly prosecute the drug companies so that they would turn their activities in great detail. Many are also of the opinion that the pharmaceuticals giants should criminal cases instead of civil ones, including Senator Kamala Harris, a senator belonging to the democratic party. She even went a step further and declared these companies as "high-level dope dealers". This view aligns with the views of Anne Case, a 2015 Nobel prize winner and a professor at Princeton University. She equates drugs to loaded guns that are handed over to the people in a "suicide ward" which has made the situation worse in the first place. It is somewhat true, as the maker of Oxytocin known as Purdue Pharma has made so much money of the drug that even if they pay billions of dollars nothing will happen to their coffers. They will still walk off the crisis as billionaires.

Another columnist Ross Douthat takes a gloomier view of the current situation, equating the crisis to a recent rise in suicide cases, and alcohol abuse in recent years. He thinks that his epidemic has roots in the current meaninglessness that the average American is experiencing. He thinks that people are influenced by neo-pagans that push depressed people into substance and drug abuse in lieu of certain abnormal religious practices.

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# Works Cited

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