

POGUST & BRASLOW, LLC

161 Washington Street, Ste. #1520
Conshohocken, PA 19428
Phone: (610) 941-4204
Fax: (610) 941-4245
pogustbraslow.com

DEREK T. BRASLOW, ESQ.
dbraslow@pogustbraslow.com

October 17, 2006

VIA FACSIMILE ONLY (202) 307-2825

The Honorable Alberto Gonzales
Attorney General
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington D.C., 20530-0001

RE: Lisa Van Syckel Meeting on Antidepressants and School Violence

Dear Mr. Attorney General,

Last week you spoke with our client Lisa Van Syckel at your one day summit on school violence and requested that she contact you to set up a personal meeting. As you may recall, Lisa is the mother of a child who became violent and attempted suicide while taking an antidepressant. I represented Lisa in the lawsuit against the manufacturer of the antidepressant that injured her child and continue to represent those injured due to violence as a result of ingesting these dangerous medications. Since the resolution of Lisa's suit, she has become a strong advocate for patient and physician rights in fighting for the disclosure of the risks of antidepressant medication.

As Lisa began to explain to you at the meeting, studies have linked antidepressant medication to violence, and at least 10 school shooters since 1998 were under the influence of antidepressant drugs.

- May 20, 1988: Winnetka, Illinois: Laurie Dann walked into a second grade classroom and killed one child and wounded five others before killing herself. The antidepressant Anafranil was in her bloodstream at the time of the murder.
- September 26, 1988: Greenwood, South Carolina: 19-year-old James Wilson took a .22 caliber revolver into an elementary school and killed two 8-year-old girls and wounded seven other children and two teachers. He had been on several psychiatric drugs, including Xanax and Haldol.
- January 17, 1989: Stockton, California: Patrick Purdy opened fire on a school yard full of young children, killing five schoolchildren and wounding thirty others before killing himself. Purdy had been on two strong psychiatric drugs.
- December 1993: Chelsea, Michigan: Steven Leith walked back into a school meeting and fatally shot the school superintendent and wounded two others including a fellow teacher. He was on Prozac at the time of the shootings.

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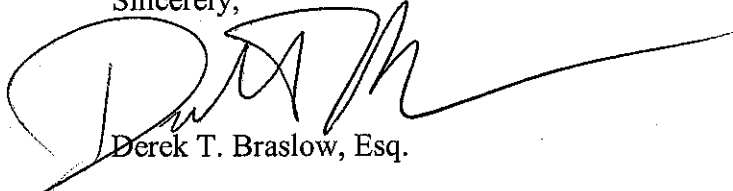
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- May 21, 1998: Springfield, Oregon: 15-year-old Kip Kinkel murdered his own parents and then proceeded to school where he opened fire on students in the cafeteria, killing two and wounding 22. Kinkel had been on Prozac.
- April 16, 1999: Notus, Idaho: 15-year-old Shawn Cooper fired two shotgun rounds in his school narrowly missing students; he was taking a mix of antidepressants.
- April 20, 1999: Columbine, Colorado: 18-year-old Eric Harris was on the antidepressant Luvox when he and his partner Dylan Klebold killed twelve classmates and a teacher before taking his own life in the bloodiest school massacre in history. The coroner confirmed that the antidepressant was in his system while Dylan Klebold's autopsy was never made public.
- April 29 1999: Taber, Alberta: 14 year old boy shot two children, killing one. He was taking Dexadrine.
- May 20, 1999: Conyers, Georgia: 15-year-old T.J. Solomon was being treated with a mix of antidepressants when he opened fire on and wounded 6 of his classmates.
- March 7, 2000: Williamsport, Pennsylvania: 14-year-old Elizabeth Bush was on the antidepressant Prozac when she shot at fellow students, wounding one.
- March 22, 2001: El Cajon, California: 18-year-old Jason Hoffman was on two antidepressants, Effexor and Celexa, when he opened fire at his California high school wounding five.
- April 10, 2001: Wahluke, Washington: 16-year-old Cory Baadsgaard took a rifle to his high school, and held 23 classmates and a teacher hostage while on a high dose of the antidepressant Effexor.
- March 21, 2005: Red Lake Indian Reservation, Minnesota: 16-year-old Native American Jeff Weise, reportedly under the influence of the antidepressant Prozac, went on a shooting rampage at home and at his school, killing nine people and wounding five before committing suicide.

These are but a few of the cases that have been made public and while you may be familiar with risks of suicide and antidepressants because the FDA has formally concluded that a causal relationship exists, just last month a new study published in the Public Library of Science ("PLoS"), reports that in addition to suicide, these antidepressant drugs can also cause some people to become violent and homicidal.¹ This is the latest of numerous studies over the course of last decade that have reached the same conclusion. These drugs not only cause self-harm but cause homicide.

Thank you for your time, and we look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,



Derek T. Braslow, Esq.

cc: Lisa Van Syckel

¹ See <http://medicine.plosjournals.org/perlserv/?request=get-document&doi=10.1371/journal.pmed.0030372>