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My name is Renee Folk, and at the age of 32, I can say that I am a proud Melanoma Cancer survivor. I started to use indoor tanning beds at the age of 16. I was never ever told of the dangers that *I may incur* from *using* indoor tanning beds. In fact, I was told that it was better and safer than tanning in the sun. *I was informed* that the UV rays from indoor tanning beds were much safer *than* the suns. I was also informed that it was better to get a base tan before you actually *do* go in the sun. I used indoor tanning beds *almost* 4 months of the year, 5 days a week, all the way up to my diagnosis at the age of 28. I *didn't realize* that each time I got into the tanning bed I was playing a potentially deadly game of Russian Roulette.

I had a mole on *the* top of my head that I had biopsied by Dr. Dowd at the Williamsport Hospital. On my 28th birthday, I got the call that literally made my knees go weak and that would change my life forever. Dr. Dowd informed that I had Stage II Malignant Melanoma. *Her exact words were "if I did not get it treated I would be dead in 3 years"*. That started my journey of going to Danville Medical Center for many trips on an almost daily basis to the Oncologists, General Surgeon & Plastic Surgeon. In fact, I was still going tanning at an indoor tanning bed when I went for my first visit to the doctors. I was somewhat in denial at that point in time. That is until Dr. Bertsch, my General Surgeon, literally screamed at me "Do you not realize what you have can kill you!!" Having a doctor full of rage, concern and compassion yelling at you can snap you into reality very quickly I must say. Being so young and having such an advanced form of skin cancer, all of my doctors, including my dermatologist, firmly believe that my use of indoor tanning beds played a major role in my diagnosis. On September 20th, I first went in for Lymph Node Mapping. They stuck 6 large needles full of radioactive dye in the mole on my head to find what Lymph Nodes went to that mole on my head. That, I must say, was an extremely painful and unpleasant process. Then I went in for a 6 hour surgery to remove the mole on my scalp and a large portion around it. This also involved the removal of 2 lymph nodes. I ended up with 160 stitches in my head & 80 in my neck. I since then have permanent nerve damage from the removal of those lymph nodes.

My Melanoma did not only affect me. It affected everyone around me. My mother would weep in private because it was so hard and painful to watch me her youngest daughter, her baby, to have to fight cancer. I would go to her after each doctor visit. I would cry and weep over the fears that I had. Yet in front of me my mother had to remain strong. It affected my boyfriend at the time (the one who had found the mole on my head) to watch the girl he loved have to go through everything that I did. It have an effect on everyone in my family and every single one of my friends. So, yes, you must remember; Melanoma, well cancer in general, has an effect on not just the one who has cancer but everyone that they have in their lives.

I will be celebrating 5 years of being cancer free this July 25th. Yet the effects from having been in those tanning beds still haunt me. The doctors informed me since I was diagnosed at such a young age the likelihood of me getting it again is significant. This fear has stopped me from wanting to have any children. I do not want any child of mine to have to one day watch me go through what I went through before, or to possibly watch me die from Melanoma. And yes, Melanoma does kill. Every time I get a biopsy done and they find a suspicious mole I am on pins & needles till I get that call back that everything came back ok. I so desperately wish that I could go back in time and tell my 16 year old self to not go to those indoor tanning beds. I would tell myself that one day the results of getting into those tanning beds would be cancer and it would change the rest of my life.

So, yes, I desperately feel that this bill should be passed. It is greatly needed!!! I truly believe the use of indoor UV tanning facilities should be banned for minors under the age of 18. Minors are not aware of the long term effects that indoor tanning has on their bodies. There is not enough awareness and education for our youth to make the right decision. This is why a law should be passed to prevent minors from even having the opportunity to damage their body. No one, especially young teenagers and adults like myself, should have to go through the extreme physical and emotional burden that skin cancer creates. I strongly believe our youth should be protected from the many dangers indoor tanning causes.

Thank you.