

February 27, 2025

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Durbin:

We the undersigned, representing national, state, and local organizations, write to express our strong support for the bipartisan Halt All Lethal Trafficking (HALT) of Fentanyl Act (S.331). As organizations that represent the major groups across all disciplines working on a comprehensive response to address the substance use disorder and overdose crisis facing our country, this bipartisan legislation represents a critical step forward in our collective fight against the devastating opioid crisis fueled by the rampant trafficking of fentanyl.

We appreciate Congress's dedication and commitment to addressing the addiction crisis, which tragically led to nearly 107,000 drug overdose deaths in 2023 alone.¹ Illicitly manufactured fentanyl and counterfeit pills are the primary drivers of the escalating overdose crisis nationwide. A recent report showed that illegally manufactured fentanyl was involved in approximately 68% of overdose deaths in the U.S. in 2022.² Targeting the amount of fentanyl in the drug supply has already proven successful in reducing the potential overdose risk. A study published in the International Journal of Drug Policy showed that law enforcement seized over 115 million fentanyl pills in 2023, a stark increase from the roughly 49,000 pills seized in 2017.³

The HALT Fentanyl Act makes permanent the classification of fentanyl knockoffs, known as fentanyl-related substances, as Schedule I, providing law enforcement, states, and localities with vital resources to combat this crisis nationwide. The legislation ensures that law enforcement and prosecutors maintain the necessary tools to address the opioid crisis, including preventing illegal trafficking, reducing the drug supply, helping prosecutors build stronger cases, and invoking strict punishments for fentanyl-related crimes.

We respectfully request quick Committee action to send the HALT Fentanyl Act (S.331) to the Senate floor for a vote. The urgency of this issue cannot be overstated. We lose 295 people every

¹ Spencer MR, Garnett MF, Miniño AM. Drug overdose deaths in the United States, 2002–2022. NCHS Data Brief, no 491. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2024. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.15620/cdc:135849>

² Wide-ranging online data for epidemiologic research (WONDER). Atlanta, GA: CDC, National Center for Health Statistics; 2022. Available at <http://wonder.cdc.gov>.

³ Palamar JJ, Fitzgerald N, Carr TH, Cottler LB, Ciccarone D. National and regional trends in fentanyl seizures in the United States, 2017-2023. *Int J Drug Policy*. 2024 May 3:104417. doi: 10.1016/j.drugpo.2024.104417. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 38744553; PMCID: PMC11531607.

day to overdose. By advancing this bill swiftly, you will provide families, communities, and law enforcement with the tools necessary to address the crisis.

We thank you for your leadership in turning the tide against this crisis that continues to claim thousands of lives and disrupt families across our nation.

Sincerely,