



Combating Online Fentanyl Trafficking Act

Supporting law enforcement efforts to prevent online fentanyl trafficking.
Sponsored by Congressman Joe Neguse (D-CO) and Congresswoman Laurel Lee (R-FL)

THE PROBLEM

In 2021, there were 107,622 drug overdose deaths, a 15% increase from 2020.¹ Opioids accounted for approximately 75% of these overdose deaths, and approximately 88 percent of all opioid deaths were caused by fentanyl.² Increasingly, opioids are bought and sold anonymously over the dark web, making it difficult for law enforcement officers without specialized skills to track.³ One 2021 study identified more than 28,000 listings for opioids on anonymous online marketplaces.⁴ Selling opioids on the dark web is difficult to track and requires specialized cyber skills. To attract and retain officers and prosecutors with the requisite skills, the Department of Justice (DOJ) must be able to pay competitive salaries.

SOLUTIONS PROVIDED BY THE LEGISLATION

This bill would support law enforcement and prosecutors who conduct cyber investigations into online fentanyl trafficking by allowing DOJ to offer pay of up to 25% more than the base pay rate for law enforcement officers or prosecutors who have significant cyber investigative skills that are used to investigate fentanyl. The legislation also exempts this increased pay from certain existing pay limits.

Endorsing Organizations: The National District Attorney's Association, the Major City Chiefs, Fraternal Order of Police, Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, Sergeants Benevolent Association, and the National Association of Police Organizations.

¹ See https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs_press_releases/2022/202205.htm.

² See *id.*

³ See <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/10/business/dealbook/opioid-dark-web-drug-overdose.html>.

⁴ See <https://www.jmir.org/2021/2/e24486>.