



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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CHUCK CANTERBURY
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1 February 2017

The Honorable David P. Joyce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Joyce,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our support for H.R. 664, the “Stem the Tide of Overdose Prevalence from Opiate Drugs Act (STOP OD Act).” This legislation is necessary to curb the number of overdoses due to synthetic fentanyl that has been found to be 100 times more potent than heroin, and helps equip law enforcement officers with the lifesaving drug naloxone.

Law enforcement officers are almost always the first on the scene—even before the paramedics arrive. In these life and death situations, our officers are not looking to make an arrest, but to save a life. Many States and jurisdictions have successfully equipped their officers with this life-saving drug, trained them to recognize the symptoms of an overdose, and administer it on the scene. This legislation eliminates the civil liability for law enforcement officers administering naloxone.

This bill allows the United States Sentencing Commission to consider the presence of fentanyl in connection to the illicit distribution of an illicit substance as a cutting agent. If fentanyl is present as a cutting agent or in its pure form, the Sentencing Commission may consider such presence as an aggravating factor at the sentencing hearing.

The legislation also helps identify and report fentanyl in overdose mortalities, which will help the States and Federal government to allocate resources more accurately to these regions that have been adversely affected by the rise in fentanyl overdoses.

The FOP and the wider law enforcement community has, in the past, supported increased penalties on certain drugs which demonstrate a greater danger to users and to the public at large. We support this approach now with the rise in the use of and deaths from fentanyl just as we did more than two decades ago as we struggled to combat the crack cocaine epidemic. The FOP and law enforcement regard the strategies we employed then to have been successful in arresting the impact of the crack cocaine epidemic and yet we found ourselves years later accused of unfairly

targeting persons based on racial or other demographics. This is despite the fact that we worked hand-in-hand with Congress, including the Congressional Black Caucus. It is our hope that there will be no rush to judgement or second-guessing to using this approach again and that, moving forward, we recognize a heavier penalty should be imposed when these dealers distribute drugs containing fentanyl because of the increased chance of death to users.

On behalf of more than 330,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I want to thank you for the introduction of this legislation again. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or Jim Pasco in my Washington office.

Sincerely,



Chuck Canterbury
National President