

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 409, nays 9, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 235]

YEAS—409

Adams	Crenshaw	Harder (CA)
Aderholt	Crockett	Harshbarger
Aguilar	Crow	Hayes
Allen	Cuellar	Hern
Allred	Curtis	Higgins (LA)
Amodei	D'Esposito	Higgins (NY)
Armstrong	Davids (KS)	Himes
Arrington	Davidson	Hinson
Babin	Davis (IL)	Horsford
Bacon	Davis (NC)	Houchin
Baird	De La Cruz	Houlahan
Balderson	Dean (PA)	Hoyer
Balint	DeGette	Hoyle (OR)
Banks	DeLauro	Hudson
Barr	DelBene	Huffman
Barragán	Deluzio	Huizenga
Bean (FL)	DeSaulnier	Hunt
Beatty	DesJarlais	Issa
Bentz	Diaz-Balart	Ivey
Bera	Dingell	Jackson (IL)
Bergman	Doggett	Jackson (NC)
Bice	Donalds	Jackson (TX)
Billirakis	Duarte	Jackson Lee
Bishop (GA)	Duncan	Jacobs
Bishop (NC)	Dunn (FL)	James
Blumenauer	Edwards	Jayapal
Blunt Rochester	Ellzey	Jeffries
Boebert	Emmer	Johnson (GA)
Bonamici	Escobar	Johnson (LA)
Bost	Eshoo	Johnson (OH)
Bowman	Españillat	Johnson (SD)
Boyle (PA)	Estes	Jordan
Brown	Evans	Joyce (OH)
Brownley	Ezell	Joyce (PA)
Buchanan	Fallon	Kamllager-Dove
Buck	Feenstra	Kaptur
Bucshon	Ferguson	Kean (NJ)
Budzinski	Finstad	Keating
Burchett	Fischbach	Kelly (IL)
Burgess	Fitzgerald	Kelly (MS)
Burlison	Fitzpatrick	Kelly (PA)
Bush	Fleischmann	Khanna
Calvert	Fletcher	Kiggans (VA)
Cammack	Flood	Kildee
Caraveo	Foster	Kiley
Carbajal	Foushee	Kilmer
Cárdenas	Fox	Kim (CA)
Carey	Frankel, Lois	Kim (NJ)
Carl	Franklin, C.	Krishnamoorthi
Carson	Scott	Kuster
Carter (GA)	Frost	Kustoff
Carter (LA)	Fry	LaHood
Carter (TX)	Fulcher	LaLota
Cartwright	Gaetz	LaMalfa
Casar	Gallagher	Lamborn
Case	Galleo	Landsman
Casten	Garamendi	Langworthy
Castor (FL)	Garbarino	Larsen (WA)
Castro (TX)	Garcia (IL)	Latta
Chavez-DeRemer	Garcia (TX)	LaTurner
Cherfilus-	Garcia, Mike	Lawler
McCormick	Gimenez	Lee (CA)
Chu	Golden (ME)	Lee (FL)
Cicilline	Goldman (NY)	Lee (NV)
Ciscomani	Gomez	Lee (PA)
Clark (MA)	Gonzales, Tony	Leger Fernandez
Clarke (NY)	Gonzalez,	Lesko
Cleaver	Vicente	Letlow
Cline	Good (VA)	Levin
Cloud	Gooden (TX)	Lieu
Clyburn	Gottheimer	Lofgren
Cohen	Granger	Loudermilk
Cole	Graves (LA)	Lucas
Collins	Graves (MO)	Luetkemeyer
Comer	Green (TN)	Luttrell
Connolly	Green, Al (TX)	Lynch
Correa	Greene (GA)	Mace
Costa	Griffith	Magaziner
Courtney	Grijalva	Malliotakis
Craig	Grothman	Mann
Crane	Guest	Manning
Crawford	Guthrie	Massie

Mast	Peters	Steil
Matsui	Pettersen	Steube
McBath	Pfluger	Stevens
McCarthy	Phillips	Stewart
McCaul	Pingree	Strickland
McClain	Pocan	Strong
McClellan	Porter	Swallwell
McClintock	Posey	Sykes
McCollum	Pressley	Takano
McGarvey	Ramirez	Tenney
McGovern	Raskin	Thanedar
McHenry	Reschenthaler	Thompson (CA)
Meeks	Rodgers (WA)	Thompson (MS)
Menendez	Rogers (AL)	Thompson (PA)
Meng	Rogers (KY)	Tiffany
Meuser	Rose	Timmons
Mfume	Rosendale	Titus
Miller (IL)	Ross	Tlaib
Miller (OH)	Rouzer	Tokuda
Miller (WV)	Ruiz	Tonko
Miller-Meeks	Ruppersberger	Torres (CA)
Mills	Rutherford	Torres (NY)
Molinaro	Ryan	Trahan
Moolenaar	Salazar	Trone
Moore (AL)	Salinas	Turner
Moore (UT)	Sánchez	Underwood
Moore (WI)	Santos	Valadao
Moran	Sarbanes	Van Drew
Morelle	Scalise	Van Dine
Moskowitz	Schakowsky	Van Orden
Moulton	Schiff	Vasquez
Mrvan	Schneider	Veasey
Mullin	Scholten	Velázquez
Murphy	Schweikert	Wagner
Nadler	Scott (VA)	Walberg
Neal	Scott, Austin	Waltz
Nehls	Scott, David	Wasserman
Newhouse	Self	Schultz
Nickel	Sessions	Waters
Norcross	Sewell	Watson Coleman
Norman	Sherman	Weber (TX)
Nunn (IA)	Sherrill	Webster (FL)
Ocasio-Cortez	Slotkin	Wenstrup
Omar	Smith (MO)	Westerman
Owens	Smith (NE)	Wexton
Pallone	Smith (NJ)	Wild
Palmer	Smith (WA)	Williams (GA)
Panetta	Smucker	Williams (NY)
Pappas	Sorensen	Williams (TX)
Pascrell	Soto	Wilson (FL)
Payne	Spartz	Wilson (SC)
Pelosi	Stansbury	Wittman
Peltola	Stanton	Womack
Pence	Stauber	Yakym
Perez	Stefanik	Zinke
Perry		

NAYS—9

NOT VOTING—17

Biggs	Gosar	McCormick
Brecheen	Hageman	Roy
Clyde	Harris	Spanberger
Alford	Luna	Quigley
Auchincloss	Mooney	Scanlon
Beyer	Napolitano	Schrier
Garcia, Robert	Neguse	Simpson
Hill	Obornolte	Vargas
Larson (CT)	Ogles	

□ 1727

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Ms. SPANBERGER. Madam Speaker, I inadvertently voted "nay" on rollcall No. 235 on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as amended H.R. 1669, VET-TEC Authorization Act. I meant to vote "yea."

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Madam Speaker, I was absent for votes due to testing positive for COVID-19. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall No. 233, "nay" on rollcall No. 234 and "yea" on rollcall No. 235.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. OGLES. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 233,

"yea" on rollcall No. 234, and "yea" on rollcall No. 235.

## MOMENT OF SILENCE IN HONOR OF THE ROBB ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SHOOTING VICTIMS

(Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas. Madam Speaker, I ask for a moment of silence in honor of the 1-year anniversary of the 21 Robb Elementary school victims who were murdered in my district in Uvalde, Texas.

## HOOR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kentucky?

There was no objection.

## HALT ALL LETHAL TRAFFICKING OF FENTANYL ACT

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on the legislation and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 467.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MORAN). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kentucky?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 429 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 467.

The Chair appoints the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. GREENE) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1734

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 467) to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to the scheduling of fentanyl-related substances, and for other purposes, with Ms. GREENE of Georgia in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

General debate shall be confined to the bill and amendments specified in the first section of House Resolution 429 and shall not exceed 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) and the gentleman from New

Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chair, action is needed now to address the fentanyl crisis. That is why I rise today in strong support of H.R. 467, the HALT Fentanyl Act.

Fentanyl is the top cause of death for Americans 18 to 49 years old. In my home State of Kentucky, illicit fentanyl overdoses represented 70 percent of all overdoses in 2020 and 2021.

The fentanyl crisis is one of the foremost problems that the American public faces and has been made worse by the crisis at our southern border. Illicit fentanyl is turning virtually every community into a border community with these poisons flooding streets across America and taking innocent lives, including the lives of our kids.

The HALT Fentanyl Act would ban all fentanyl analogues and strip the drug cartels and other criminals of the incentive to create new versions of fentanyl to skirt around the law. This bill is a key step to help get these poisons off our streets and give law enforcement the tools they need to crack down on illicit fentanyl trafficking.

A two-pronged approach to addressing this crisis is needed. We must have a law enforcement and a substance use recovery strategy to address this crisis. That is why I look forward to examining the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act later this year to continue providing access to treatment and recovery support services that so many individuals rely on throughout the country.

To those who oppose this legislation on the grounds it could lead to mass incarceration, the emergency classwide scheduling implemented by President Trump did not lead to mass incarcerations. In a Government Accountability Office study from 2021, the GAO found that there were only eight prosecutions—yes, eight prosecutions—during the period in which the Trump administration temporarily scheduled fentanyl-related substances as schedule I drugs from 2018–2020, with four of them being individuals working on behalf of the cartel because the cartels quit creating illicit fentanyl separate from the fentanyl that is poisoning our kids today.

It could be even worse. I know there are also those who believe the emergency scheduling order didn't lead to reductions in overdose deaths and that this bill before us won't effectively address the issues we are facing.

To both of those criticisms, this bill stops these analogues from being produced in the first place. Right after the classwide ban was put in place, the number of fentanyl analogue encounters dropped nearly 89 percent, more than 6,200 fewer reports of analogues. DEA officials stated that the classwide scheduling contributed to this dramatic drop.

It also includes provisions to facilitate more research into the detection of fentanyl-related substances and potential treatment of fentanyl poisonings, something that has much more red tape in the status quo.

I am happy to see the White House supports two main provisions of the HALT Fentanyl Act. The HALT Fentanyl Act is one step of many this body needs to take to address the end of the overdose crisis. The time to permanently act is now, and I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on H.R. 467.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to H.R. 467. I have deep concerns with the partisan approach my Republican colleagues have taken on this bill and the harmful implications it would have on our communities if adopted.

The substance-use and overdose crisis impacts all our communities, and the American people deserve bipartisan solutions that address both public safety and public health. This bill fails on both fronts and simply continues the status quo, allowing opioid use disorder and the overdose crisis to continue to devastate American families across the Nation.

In 2018, the Drug Enforcement Administration first issued a temporary classwide scheduling order of fentanyl-related substances under schedule I, the strictest classification for drugs. Congress has voted to extend the temporary order multiple times, most recently in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023.

Despite this action over the last 4 years, overdoses have not gone down, and we have, unfortunately, not made a dent in the incidence of opioid use disorders. Fentanyl and synthetic opioids continue to flood into the country. In testimony before our committee, the DEA administrator noted the DEA seized more than 50 million fake pills and 10,000 pounds of fentanyl in 2022.

In other words, the HALT Fentanyl Act is a partisan distraction from the hard, bipartisan work that actually has to be done to address a longstanding, intractable problem that faces our communities.

We lost over 100,000 people in 2022 to overdoses. This is one of the biggest public health crises our Nation has ever faced, and now is not the time for a partisan approach. Now is the time for a comprehensive bipartisan work.

Democrats stand ready to work with Republicans on addressing the fentanyl crisis. We stand ready to work on permanent scheduling, so long as it is carefully designed to avoid exacerbating inequities in our criminal justice system.

In committee, Democrats offered amendments to improve the HALT Fentanyl Act. We asked that Republicans consider additions to the bill that reflect the Biden administration's

commonsense interagency proposal. The proposal would permanently schedule FRS but establish a set of guardrails that promote a scientific and equitable approach. The administration's proposal is reflected in bipartisan legislation that was introduced by Representatives Pappas, Gonzales, and Newhouse and includes an off-ramp to allow for expedited descheduling of FRS that are found to be either inert or have medical applications. There is already evidence that at least one FRS could have potential applications for reversing overdoses, similar to naloxone, and we must provide for such substances to be rapidly descheduled.

The Biden administration's proposal also strikes the right balance on public safety by ensuring that permanent scheduling of FRS does not exacerbate existing inequities in our criminal justice system. It eliminates mandatory minimum standards involving FRS unless an offense results in serious bodily injury or death. Instead, the Republican majority has opted to continue failed punitive mandatory minimum sentencing that we know will disproportionately impact communities of color while doing nothing to address the underlying opioid crisis.

Now, as this bill comes to the House floor, Republicans are continuing to refuse to make this legislation better. Almost 90 amendments were filed for consideration on this bill, and Republicans ruled nearly all of them out of order, including the bipartisan Pappas amendment. An amendment from Representative PETTERSEN of Colorado would have provided the off-ramp for rapid descheduling of FRS that are inert or have medical applications. An amendment offered by Representative CROCKETT of Texas would have ensured that Federal law does not stand in the way of the use of fentanyl test strips which have proven to reduce overdoses from fentanyl and FRS. Unfortunately, Republicans refused to make any of these commonsense amendments in order, despite the fact that they are clearly germane.

We simply cannot incarcerate our way out of a public health crisis. The HALT Fentanyl Act does not provide any resources for research, prevention, treatment, recovery, or harm reduction. It also does not provide law enforcement or public health agencies with any additional resources to detect and intercept illicit drugs entering the country.

In fact, nearly every House Republican voted in favor of the default on America act, which would inflict devastating cuts that would force communities to lay off thousands of law enforcement officers and first responders, and that is in addition to the significant cuts the default on America act would make to substance use programs that help treat patients in our communities.

The reality is that this bill, paired with Republican efforts to slash vital public health and safety funding, will

leave our communities worse off and exacerbate existing inequities in our criminal justice system.

Madam Chair, I can't support the underlying bill in its current form. I encourage my colleagues to oppose it. I hope that at some point we can get back to doing some bipartisan work that will really make a difference in terms of this opioid and fentanyl crisis.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1745

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Chair, this was a bipartisan bill. It got bipartisan votes in committee. It is the DEA's number one priority.

If you are selling fentanyl to our kids, you deserve to be incarcerated. We don't apologize for that.

Madam Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Washington State (Mrs. RODGERS), the chairwoman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mrs. RODGERS of Washington. Madam Chair, to save lives and make our community safer, I rise in support of the HALT Fentanyl Act.

Illicit fentanyl is one of the greatest threats that we face as a nation. Illicit drug manufacturers are diverting precursor chemicals from some of China's 160,000 chemical plants and shipping them to Mexico, where cartels are producing mass quantities of illicit fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances. These are being smuggled across our southern border and killing more people than ever.

According to an analysis by The Washington Post, fentanyl poisoning is the number one cause of death for people 18 to 49.

I think about my friend Molly Cain from Spokane, who lost her son Carson, and Deb and Ray Cullen from Pennsylvania, who lost their son Zach. Both Carson and Zach were killed instantly by substances laced with illicit fentanyl.

Molly asked me how many more letters from grieving parents is it going to take for action.

The fact is it shouldn't take another letter, another day. It shouldn't take another lost loved one.

The HALT Fentanyl Act will save lives.

We must make sure that law enforcement has the permanent tools that they need to seize these extremely lethal poisons. It is DEA's number one priority. Without these tools, drug traffickers being sourced from China will be emboldened to push deadlier and deadlier drugs across the border. We can't let that happen.

Let's come together today for a more secure future for every community in America.

Madam Chair, I urge support of the HALT Fentanyl Act.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Delaware (Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER), a member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Madam Chair, I thank Ranking Member PALLONE for yielding me time.

Madam Chair, today, I rise to talk about a public health emergency impacting every corner of our Nation: fentanyl.

As Congress debates the best approach to combating synthetic opioids, what we can all agree on is that every single one of us is impacted. I urge my colleagues to keep our focus on comprehensive and sustainable solutions.

In 2021, in my small State of Delaware, we lost over 500 family members, friends, coworkers, and neighbors to overdoses. Of the more than 500 Delawareans lost to overdose, 80 percent involved fentanyl. Those numbers, unfortunately, are poised to get worse.

As the former deputy secretary of health and social services in Delaware, my career has made me look at these challenges through a lens of public health. That is why I was proud to join my colleagues Representative ANNIE KUSTER and DON BACON in introducing the STOP Fentanyl Overdoses Act.

Our bipartisan bill takes a comprehensive public health approach to reducing fentanyl overdoses by expanding testing, improving data collection and analysis, and expanding treatment for opioid use disorder.

Our approach is supported by a broad and diverse coalition, including the Drug Policy Alliance, American Psychological Association Services, and Partnership to End Addiction.

As we continue to work to combat the fentanyl crisis, an issue that I know we all care deeply about, I hope we will keep a comprehensive public health approach top of mind.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GRIFFITH), the bill's sponsor.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Madam Chair, everyone in this body knows someone who has been affected by the drug overdose epidemic.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2022, there were more than 107,000 overdose deaths in the U.S. Sixty-seven percent of those deaths involved synthetic opioids like fentanyl.

Right now, fentanyl analogues are considered schedule I substances, but only because of a series of scheduling orders that expire on December 31, 2024. Since we put that temporary order into place, we have seen a reduction in the trafficking of fentanyl analogues into our country.

According to a 2021 GAO report, fentanyl analogues coming into the U.S. dropped by 90 percent in the year that we did the temporary scheduling. This bill aims to curb overdose deaths by permanently scheduling fentanyl analogues as schedule I substances. This will strengthen law enforcement's ability to prosecute fentanyl traffickers and act as a deterrent.

The HALT Fentanyl Act also promotes research—this is something new—by removing barriers to the research.

In the Energy and Commerce Committee, we heard that there are as many as 4,800 potential analogues. Our experts at NIH, FDA, and other agencies have studied roughly 30 of the 4,800. By encouraging research of schedule I substances like fentanyl analogues, we can better understand how these substances work and how we may prevent potential harmful impacts in the future.

Because fentanyl itself has a proven medical use, it is considered a schedule II narcotic, but illicit derivatives of fentanyl, also called fentanyl analogues, currently have not demonstrated medical value.

Let me be clear. This bill will have no impact whatsoever on a physician's ability to administer fentanyl in proper medical scenarios. The HALT Fentanyl Act deals specifically with fentanyl analogues, not fentanyl itself.

The DEA has said that permanently scheduling fentanyl analogues is their top legislative priority. We must not allow this temporary extension to expire.

On Monday, the Biden administration released a positive statement regarding the bill. In the statement, they supported the provisions I just described: permanent scheduling and streamlined research.

The Biden administration did recommend a few other items they would like to see related to fentanyl analogues. I am open and willing to have those discussions, but that is not this bill.

Madam Chair, we should vote to advance this bill that we agree on and that does help stop the bad guys, particularly those bringing these substances over the border.

Once fentanyl analogues are permanently made schedule I, Congress will continue to build off this work and continue to address the illicit fentanyl crisis.

These large numbers that we have seen on fentanyl deaths and fentanyl analogues are because of these drugs coming across the border. They are 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin. Why would we not take every step possible that we can to stop it?

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Chair, I know the Republicans have a number of speakers, so I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA).

Mr. LATTA. Madam Chair, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Chair, for over 2 years, I have worked with my colleague from Virginia's Ninth District to pass the HALT Fentanyl Act. During this time, our country has reeled from a record-breaking number of poisonings. In both 2021 and 2022, over 100,000 Americans died of an overdose.

What was the main culprit? Fentanyl-related substances.

In 2021, 77 percent of teen overdose deaths were attributed to an illicit

fentanyl poisoning, and it is now the number one cause of deaths among adults 18 to 49.

This crisis has simply spiraled out of control, and action must be taken immediately. That is why our bill, the HALT Fentanyl Act, comes into play.

Right now, these fentanyl substances are temporarily set as a schedule I narcotic. If this class-wide scheduling were to expire, drug traffickers will be given the green light to push deadlier drugs; law enforcement will lose authority to seize these deadly narcotics; and Americans will continue to die.

I am pleased the House is taking up this bill to permanently place fentanyl-related substances as a schedule I narcotic.

Let me take a moment to clear up a misconception about this bill. This isn't about criminal justice reform. This is about justice for the victims of fentanyl poisoning. Cartels are killing our citizens for 10 cents. Let me repeat that: Cartels are killing our citizens for 10 cents. That is how much it costs to make a pill in Mexico that is fentanyl-laced.

This is the DEA's number one priority. We owe it to our constituents to fix this permanently.

Currently, to trigger a 10-year mandatory minimum, an offense must involve 100 grams or more of a mixture containing a fentanyl analogue. Because the average lethal dose of fentanyl is just 2 milligrams, the offense would need to contain roughly 50,000 lethal doses. Again, that is 50,000 human beings that would be murdered from fentanyl poisoning.

Madam Chair, I strongly encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support the HALT Fentanyl Act to help end this crisis and save innocent lives.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Madam Chair, I stand today in solidarity with the millions of Black and Brown folks who have been locked up over the failed war on drugs.

I stand before you today some 50 years from the war on drugs and 39 years after President Reagan signed the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984, which expanded penalties on weed possession, established mandatory minimums, and created civil asset forfeiture—50 years since establishing drug policies that systematically led to the mass incarceration of generations of Black men.

But somehow, this war on drugs will be different.

We don't always know the consequences of a bill like this, but with the HALT Fentanyl Act, we all know.

We have to listen to our experts: our public health, criminal justice, and civil rights organizations. They are on the ground doing the work in our communities, and 158 of them just told us that, no, the HALT Fentanyl Act will not help the American people, as this

bill claims it would. It will only cause harm, especially to Black, Brown, and low-income Americans.

We really didn't need the experts on this one. We have had decades to observe the effects of policies just like this.

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing and expecting different results. The HALT Fentanyl Act will do exactly what it was designed to do if we allow it to pass.

We have seen 50 years of a terrifying merry-go-round: the economy struggles, housing becomes less stable, and a tough-on-crime approach is promoted as the solution. Lock up those most impacted, our siblings and neighbors struggling with addiction. Lock them up.

Who is winning? Not the 350,000 folks currently serving time for drug offenses, not the families that have been torn apart by mass incarceration. Imagine the loss of generational wealth.

Communities have been left without parents, grandparents, neighbors, leaders, and friends. Families are mourning tens of thousands that have died every year from drug overdoses.

Policies like this one do not lead to healing. They do not lead to safety. They do not lead to justice, and we do deserve justice.

We know there is a correlation between poverty and crime, not race and crime. We do not need tough-on-crime policies. We need to be tough on inequality, but for true, systemic change, we have to be willing to consider different roads. We have to be willing to consider community-based, trauma-informed, and harm-reducing policies. We must resist the urge to hearken back to tough-on-crime rhetoric.

Tough on crime is merely tough on community. We can do better, and we must do better than the HALT Fentanyl Act.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS).

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Chair, I thank the chairman of the Health Subcommittee for his leadership and for yielding me time.

Madam Chair, I rise today in support of the HALT Fentanyl Act. The American people are in the midst of a staggering illicit fentanyl crisis. Our kids are dying, Madam Chair. We need to do everything we possibly can to help these kids.

Sadly, we read daily headlines, Madam Chair, of adults, teens, and even toddlers who have died from fentanyl poisoning.

My colleagues across the aisle, they kicked the can down the road. They have kicked it down the road too long, Madam Chair, and look at the consequences as fentanyl-related substances still remain only temporarily scheduled. The time is now to make it permanent.

Today, we take an overdue step in the right direction, and as a proud ad-

vocate for individuals suffering with substance use disorder, I know this is just one step. Much more needs to be done, and I am thankful the gentleman has brought this bill to the floor.

Sadly, we continue to see a huge influx of fentanyl-related substances into the country from across the Mexican border, from cartels using chemicals imported from China and India.

□ 1800

I am disheartened to see communities across my State of Florida and across the Nation bearing the ramifications of these criminal actors and our open-border policies. We must secure the border.

This is a nonpartisan issue, in my opinion, and we must come together to address the opioid crisis. We are at war with these cartels, Madam Chair.

I would like to see my Democratic colleagues heed the Biden administration's public support of these critical measures. Just this Monday, they issued their support for the policies in this bill, urging Congress to pass these measures to address public safety and save lives.

I say to my colleagues across the aisle: Work with us on this and on other meaningful policy solutions to combat fentanyl in our Nation.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE).

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Madam Chair, I rise today to strongly oppose the Republicans' HALT Fentanyl Act. Republicans want to ban American history so that they can repeat the bad parts.

Did we learn nothing from the war on drugs?

I guess not. Real talk was a huge failure. Back then we enacted ineffective and punitive laws that only worked to expand mass incarceration, mostly of Black and Brown folks.

This legislation will enact ineffective and punitive drug laws that only work to expand mass incarceration.

Who will suffer?

Mostly Black and Brown folks. The data shows that all races are facing challenges with fentanyl.

This legislation would put us on a dangerous path toward unjust and disproportionate mandatory minimums for the possession of all fentanyl-related substances.

News flash: Research is still needed on possible and legal pharmacological use of these substances. Fentanyl is still being prescribed legally and used in controlled settings by medical doctors. That is right. Republicans don't like science.

In its current form, this bill allows for no flexibility, and won't address the root issue. This bill is shortsighted because some of these substances could still be key to developing treatment for fentanyl overdoses.

Instead of learning about how we can save people from fentanyl, we want to criminalize all of the fentanyl-related substances.

Madam Chair, 97 percent of the illicit fentanyl seized at the border is seized at legal ports of entry. The majority of those convicted are U.S. citizens. The draconian mandatory minimums proposed under this plan don't address these issues.

In fact, this bill doesn't do anything smart. It doesn't address the humanitarian crisis we are facing at our southern border. It doesn't address the epidemic of substance abuse, and it certainly won't improve our public safety.

The majority of people who are dying from fentanyl are dying because they are taking it illegally. They are buying and searching for illicit drugs. It is not about prosecution. It is about drug use. The issue is substance abuse. That is what we should be addressing.

If you are going to propose some legislation, make it make sense. Make it address root issues and focus on the causes rather than continuing to scapegoat the same people that you have scapegoated for years and years to no end.

Madam Chair, I urge a "no" vote.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Chair, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON), the vice chair of the Health Subcommittee.

Mr. BUCSHON. Madam Chair, I point out that this is fentanyl poisoning, and just because people use illicit drugs, they certainly don't deserve to die from it.

Madam Chair, I rise in strong support of the HALT Fentanyl Act. In 2022, roughly 75,000 Americans died from poisoning by synthetic opioids, largely illicit fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances.

Illicit fentanyl poisonings are now the number one cause of death among adults ages 18 to 49, as has been pointed out many times.

People who have died from illicit fentanyl poisoning are not just statistics. They are someone's child, sibling, parent, family member, or close friend. It is happening in every community across America. It doesn't discriminate against socioeconomic class, race, or religion.

Just last week, a Federal grand jury indicted a man in Evansville, Indiana, my hometown, for selling counterfeit prescription pills laced with fentanyl over social media that caused at least three poisonings and the death of a 19-year-old woman in 2022.

Last fall, a Federal grand jury indicted another man in Evansville who sold fentanyl pills in 2021 that ended up killing a 3-year-old toddler and resulted in nonfatal poisonings of two other children in a home after they found illicit fentanyl pills in a nightstand and took them.

These are heartbreaking stories, and we in this body have the power to do something to help prevent more of them from occurring.

Let's pass the HALT Fentanyl Act and give hope to Americans whose family, friends, and loved ones, who have

been impacted by illicit fentanyl poisonings, that their loved one's death was not in vain. Support this bill.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Chair, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Chair, I rise today in strong support of the HALT Fentanyl Act, which would permanently schedule fentanyl analogues as schedule I.

Madam Chair, the United States is facing a poisoning epidemic. It is caused by illicit fentanyl and its related substances that are pouring over our southern border. Almost 200 people are dying every day from fentanyl poisoning—200.

Included in that number is a family from my district who lost their son, Wesley, to the drug at the age of 22 years. His mother writes: "My son was a victim of drug-induced homicide. He took one pill that ended up being pure fentanyl and died. He was poisoned because he trusted the wrong person and paid for it with his life."

We cannot allow the lawlessness and tragedy to continue to tear our communities apart. That is why we must pass the HALT Fentanyl Act that is before us today.

Opponents of this legislation are choosing to side with criminals over the safety and well-being of our children. That is despicable.

Madam Chair, let's pass this bill, secure the border, stem the tide of the growing fentanyl crisis, and save lives.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Chair, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey for yielding to me.

Madam Chair, I will follow up with the last two colleagues of mine, the gentlewoman from California and the previous speaker.

We cannot have what happened in the 1980s and 1990s of the scapegoating of communities with the heinous drug epidemic.

It is interesting that now that fentanyl is impacting certain communities, it is now a health issue. In the 1980s and 1990s when there was a crack epidemic in urban communities, Nancy Reagan told us: "Just say no." But here we are now, in this day and age, and now it is a major issue. Why?

Because it is impacting other communities that people tend to care more about—their communities. What we are seeing now in minority communities was going on 20 years ago and we were screaming: Please, help. Please, let's stop this scourge.

What we did was say: No, those people that are abusing those drugs are criminals. Let's lock them up—mass incarceration.

Now, in this day and age with fentanyl, it is a health issue when the

same thing was happening then is happening now. I don't know how one is a criminal act and now we need to have compassion. We do because this country is suffering. Our young people are dying. It is just unreal the scourge that this drug is.

We have to remember that fentanyl is such a powerful opioid. It is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine. Two milligrams, or the size of five grains of salt, can cause a possible overdose. We need to do something. Our young people are screaming out. They are crying. They are dying.

We cannot blame it all on the southern border. Time and time again, we have data that shows that 90 percent of the fentanyl is coming through ports of entry by American citizens. We need to address that. We need to talk about it.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Chair, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Chair, the HALT Fentanyl Act is not the way to go, but we need to come together and do something as this plague is ruining our future.

I have seen it in my community. Others have seen it now in their communities. We must come together with reasonable legislation. This is just another possible situation that starts mass incarceration once again. I know I don't want to see in your community what that did to mine over the past 20 years.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Chair, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DUNN).

Mr. DUNN of Florida. Madam Chair, I rise today to express my support for H.R. 467, the HALT Fentanyl Act.

This legislation will place all fentanyl-related substances, as a class, into schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act.

The Energy and Commerce Committee has taken an important step toward solving our fentanyl crisis. I am proud to have supported this bill since the 117th Congress.

We have heard from Molly Cain, the Cullens, and countless others who courageously told their stories of how their children were murdered by fentanyl. Make no mistake: Fentanyl is a poison in our communities. Every pill, every toke, every line of cocaine is like playing a game of Russian roulette every single time.

This crisis is happening at the hands of bad actors such as the Chinese Communist Party and the drug cartels. China remains the primary source of illicit fentanyl and its precursors that are trafficked internationally and through our porous southern border.

In fiscal year 2023, Customs and Border Patrol has seized over 17,000 pounds of fentanyl, enough to kill 11 times the entire population of the United States.

The HALT Fentanyl Act is an important step in the right direction, and we must permanently schedule these substances.

Let's call it what it is: a weapon of mass destruction. Our law enforcement officers fight heroically every day to combat this epidemic, and it is imperative that we protect them.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. KUSTER), a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Ms. KUSTER. Madam Chair, I rise today to speak in opposition to H.R. 467, the HALT Fentanyl Act.

The fentanyl crisis has touched every community across our State and country. We need to take serious, bipartisan action to address this epidemic and save lives.

Unfortunately, the legislation on the floor tonight misses the mark.

The HALT Fentanyl Act does not address how these dangerous drugs enter our country, nor does it include any measures to address the underlying demand driving the substance use crisis.

This bill simply preserves the status quo by continuing to schedule fentanyl-related substances as schedule I, which has been the case since 2018, and under current law, will be the case until December of 2024.

Scheduling alone will not change the overdose crisis. We need to broaden our scope.

Madam Chair, I urge this body to instead consider a public health approach to address this crisis. I am leading with LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER and DON BACON, a bipartisan, alternative bill that would address both the supply of and demand for illicit fentanyl in this country.

□ 1815

Our bill, the STOP Fentanyl Overdoses Act, will enhance fentanyl surveillance through investments in technology, dedicate resources to strengthen law enforcement response, and improve data collection of seized drugs.

The bill will also help reduce the demand for illicit drugs by expanding access to recovery resources, protecting people who administer opioid reversal drugs, and supporting education on the harm of drug misuse.

The STOP Fentanyl Overdoses Act is an alternative to the scheduling-only approach on the floor. An issue this complex requires an equally comprehensive solution.

Fentanyl doesn't care about our politics and neither should our approach to addressing the overdose crisis.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to consider my alternative, bipartisan solution.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. LESKO).

Mrs. LESKO. Madam Chair, our Nation is facing a tragic fentanyl crisis. Our kids are dying. Our neighbors are dying. During the last 2 years, if I may remind my Democratic colleagues,

they were in charge. They were in charge of the House, they had control of the Senate, they had control of the Presidency, and they did nothing to stop this fentanyl crisis.

Late last year, I visited the Maricopa County Medical Examiner's Office in Phoenix, Arizona. It is truly revealing. It is one of the busiest medical examiner offices in the Nation. In Maricopa County last year, fentanyl and its analogues were involved in 60 percent of all the drug-related deaths. Once more, there are record amounts of fentanyl coming across our southern border into our Arizona communities.

Did you know that last Thursday, officers at the Arizona Nogales Port of Entry seized over 207,000 fentanyl pills and over 16 pounds of fentanyl powder just in 1 day. With border officials only able to seize 5 to 10 percent of all illegal drugs, these numbers are truly terrifying. House Republicans are taking action. We are the ones introducing this bill. We are the ones getting something done. We are introducing the HALT Fentanyl Act.

Madam Chair, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation, to stop this deadly drug crisis and save lives.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chair, I don't like to disagree with my colleague from Arizona who I respect, but she did say that when the Democrats were in the majority that we didn't address the issue, and that is not accurate.

In fact, last Congress we did pass out of the Energy and Commerce Committee a bipartisan mental health and substance use treatment package, H.R. 7666, which became law as part of the consolidated appropriations bill last December, and that bill, H.R. 7666, that came out of our committee, when it came to the floor of the House, was supported by over 400 Members. Only 20 Members didn't vote for it, and it was later signed into law as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act. That new law includes the MAD Act and the MAiD Act, historic pieces of legislation that ensure medical practitioners are prepared to identify and treat substance use disorders and increase access to medication-assisted treatment, such as buprenorphine.

H.R. 7666 also reauthorized billions of dollars in public health programs that addressed the mental health and substance use crisis, including both the substance use prevention treatment and recovery services block grant and State opioid response grants.

Now, I am not suggesting that this is the end all. Obviously, more needs to be done, but part of what I think you are hearing from the Democratic side of the aisle today is that this legislation on the floor doesn't really deal with all these things. It doesn't deal with treatment. It doesn't deal with the border. It doesn't deal with law enforcement and more resources to address the fentanyl crisis.

We believe that a law that is going to really make a difference would do that, and that is the reason that we are saying that this bill that is before us, the HALT Fentanyl Act, really doesn't do anything because it just says that it is going to be in schedule I beyond 2024.

Right now, you already have synthetic fentanyl scheduled in I until the end of next year, and we haven't really seen any progress with that.

We would like to see a comprehensive approach that takes into account treatment that is a follow up on what we passed in the last Congress.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Chair, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. JOYCE).

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Chair, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Chair, 6 months ago I received an email from Ray Cullen, a resident of Franklin County, Pennsylvania, who, along with his wife, Deb, had raised their kids in my district, Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District.

Ray told the story of his son, Zach, who last year was out with a bunch of buddies when he was sold cocaine that was laced with fentanyl, unfortunately, a deadly poison that claimed Zach's life. Zach didn't know that the drugs that he and his friends had purchased were laced with this deadly synthetic opioid.

Because of how lethal the drug is in small quantities, fentanyl has become the leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 18 and 49. It was Franklin County Coroner Jeff Conner who put it so bluntly to me. He said: "Fentanyl is easy to get and it is fast to kill."

The Cullens reached out to share the memory of their son because they wanted to make a difference. They wanted to make sure that the pain that they were feeling was not shared by parents anywhere else in Pennsylvania or anywhere else in our country.

Now, on the eve of the HALT Fentanyl Act vote, we in Congress have a chance to help prevent these needless deaths by passing the HALT Fentanyl Act, legislation to finally classify these deadly fentanyl substances as schedule I narcotics.

Deb and Ray Cullen have traveled and presented their case before the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee of Health. Deb and Ray Cullen will be here tomorrow. They will be in the gallery as we have a choice to make to vote in a bipartisan fashion to halt fentanyl and its deadly cause here in the United States.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California, Mr. MIKE GARCIA.

Mr. MIKE GARCIA of California. Madam Chair, for too long, a lack of national leadership has forced law enforcement into navigating this

fentanyl crisis without the proper tools or a defined mission. The HALT Fentanyl Act would provide both the tools and the mission by permanently classifying fentanyl analogues as schedule I narcotics. This bill, which I have long supported, will mitigate this crisis by empowering police to use every tool available to get the traffickers of poison off the streets and put them in jail.

Sell fentanyl, go to jail. Poison kids, go to jail. If you don't want to go to jail, don't sell fentanyl and don't poison our kids.

Right now we are failing as a Nation. We are failing to recognize the severity of this crisis, failing to hold China and dealers accountable for their role, and we are failing to protect the people who most need it, our children.

We have lost young Americans with bright futures like Daniel Puerta from my district who was a year away from graduating when he was poisoned by a counterfeit pill sold over Snapchat. For Daniel's memory and the memory of countless others, we must act.

Madam Chair, I urge support of this bill. One last thing, 30 times the number of people who died on 9/11 last year died of fentanyl poisoning.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS).

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for yielding time.

Madam Chair, I rise today in support of HALT Fentanyl Act introduced by my friends and colleagues, MORGAN GRIFFITH and BOB LATTA.

The fentanyl crisis is ravaging our Nation, and there is no question this dangerous drug and its analogues should be scheduled. Fentanyl accounts for roughly 150 overdose deaths per day, and the number of deaths caused by fentanyl and other synthetic opioids is growing exponentially each year.

The HALT Fentanyl Act would permanently schedule fentanyl-related substances and provide law enforcement with the tools needed to keep these lethal drugs off our streets.

Should the temporary classwide scheduling expire, drug traffickers would be empowered to ramp up their operations without fear or repercussions. At our border, U.S. Customs and Border Protection would lose the authority to seize these substances, and the amount of drugs coming into our country would skyrocket.

It is hard to imagine the border crisis becoming worse than it already is, but should this scheduling expire, I am afraid the crisis would escalate even further.

As a physician and the former director of the Iowa Department of Public Health under whose purview substance use disorder and drug addiction failed, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle neglect to acknowledge a vast majority of people affected by this are not drug addicts. One pill can kill.

Furthermore, news flash: This bill doesn't hamper any legal medical use of fentanyl. Fentanyl is not only more deadly than cocaine or morphine or heroin, it is significantly easier to produce and can be sold for 100 times more than it costs to make. Bad actors will always take advantage of bad situations, and this is no exception.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill to protect our most vulnerable populations and keep fentanyl and its analogues off the street.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Chair, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from New York (Mr. D'ESPOSITO).

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Madam Chair, I rise today in support of H.R. 467, the HALT Fentanyl Act of which I am proud to cosponsor. I also find it baffling, Madam Chair, that speakers from the other side say that this does nothing when, in fact, we are working to correct the wrongs of the procriminal, open-border agenda that Democrats have passed throughout this country.

There is not one community across this Nation that has been immune to the devastating effects of fentanyl. As an NYPD detective, I have witnessed far too many Americans destroyed due to opioid addictions stemming from this horrific narcotic, and Congress must act swiftly to combat the fentanyl epidemic.

Madam Chair, I urge all my colleagues to support the HALT Act in order to make permanent classwide scheduling order for fentanyl-related substances, which is the key to preventing unneeded deaths related to fentanyl.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. Madam Chair, I rise today in support of H.R. 467, the HALT Fentanyl Act. I am a proud original cosponsor of this commonsense legislation that would permanently reschedule fentanyl-related substances as schedule I drugs. Far too often, we are hearing devastating stories from families across this great country who have lost loved ones to fentanyl-related deaths, and, in many cases, it is our young people.

Only a few milligrams of fentanyl can be lethal, which is why it is now the number one cause of death among adults 18 to 49. Deadly fentanyl-related substances are being manufactured by China and the cartels and pouring across our borders into our cities, communities, and neighborhoods.

We must ensure that our law enforcement and Border Patrol officers maintain the authority necessary to seize these drugs. That is why this body must take action.

The HALT Fentanyl Act would supply law enforcement with the tools needed to keep this deadly substance off our streets.

Madam Chair, to put it simply: This bill will save lives. I strongly urge a "yes" vote on H.R. 467.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Chair, may I inquire as to the time remaining?

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. D'ESPOSITO). The gentleman from Kentucky has 5½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from New Jersey has 8 minutes remaining.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. CAMMACK).

Mrs. CAMMACK. Mr. Chairman, today, I rise in strong support of H.R. 467, the HALT Fentanyl Act. To drive home why this bill is so important, I want to emphasize that currently there is no permanent scheduling of fentanyl, only a temporary emergency scheduling order.

That means when, not if, but when this temporary order on fentanyl expires, fentanyl-related substances will become street legal.

Think about this: Over 300 people a day will die today from fentanyl poisoning, 300 people died yesterday, and 300 people will die tomorrow of fentanyl poisoning.

□ 1830

If an airliner carrying 300 people crashed every single day, within the span of a week we would have declared a national emergency and would have begun the work on solutions, but we haven't done that here.

If we don't pass this bill, when the emergency class-wide scheduling order expires, law enforcement will no longer have the authority to seize these extremely lethal drugs. Yes, you heard me right, they will no longer have the authority.

As so many of my colleagues have said today, fentanyl is the leading cause of death for individuals between the ages of 18 and 49, surpassing COVID, cancer, heart disease, and even car accidents. In fact, the DEA, Biden's DEA, you-all's DEA, says this is their number one priority.

Every single one of us knows someone who has been affected by fentanyl. Every single one of us in this Chamber knows who is responsible for the fentanyl pouring into our country, and it is every single one of our jobs to act and pass the HALT Fentanyl Act. Let's put the politics aside, come together as Americans for our communities, for this country.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes."

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I just want to correct the record, or at least set the record straight, on what the DEA and the Biden administration are saying. I heard what my colleague on the committee said, but I want you to understand that no one on our side of the aisle, certainly not the Biden administration or the DEA, is saying that we should get rid of the current law, which says that synthetic fentanyl is on schedule I. That is the



case now. We have extended it many times. As the gentlewoman said, it is actually extended until December of 2024.

What the Biden administration, in conjunction with the DEA, is saying is that before you go ahead and permanently extend, that you should look at some of the other things that we have talked about on the Democratic side of the aisle. In other words, they say, in this task force from the administration with the DEA, that there is a real possibility that research will find that there are synthetic fentanyl substances that might actually help deal with the crisis and reverse an overdose in certain circumstances.

What they recommend is that we have an off-ramp to ensure that substances that are deemed to have a potential medical application are not improperly classified. If you pass this permanently, then you have to pass another law in order to take something off the list.

Also, they are not recommending that we have mandatory minimum incarceration involving synthetic fentanyl unless an offense results in serious bodily injury or death. This is what some of my colleagues on the Democratic side are saying, that incarceration, mandatory minimum sentencing, is not the answer. We know it hasn't been for years with other drugs, as well.

In addition to that, there should be funding to deal with the research, funding to deal with treatment, funding for law enforcement so they can prevent more fentanyl from coming into the country. None of that is included in this bill.

I just don't want my colleagues on the other side to misrepresent what DEA or what the Biden administration are saying. We all understand the nature of this crisis. We don't think that this bill is going to do anything to change that, because it just basically extends the status quo and doesn't do anything for all of these other things that have been mentioned on the Democratic side.

I think it is really important for you to understand where we are coming from on this. We don't disagree with putting this on schedule I, but we want to see a comprehensive approach, because what we are doing now has failed.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Chair, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG).

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of H.R. 467, the HALT Fentanyl Act.

A recent poll shows just 16 percent of Americans are satisfied with how things are going in the United States. Why?

Washington has largely ignored pressing issues in the past 2 years. While the fentanyl epidemic may not grab headlines in the mainstream

media, it has lost the pulse of mainstream America, few issues are more important.

Illicit fentanyl poisonings are now the number one cause of death among Americans aged 18 to 49. Nearly every American knows a friend or a relative who has struggled or even overdosed. I do.

Despite the crisis, Congress has continued to kick the can down the road by temporarily extending the class-wide scheduling order. Each time, law enforcement is left scrambling as we approach the deadline, which would let many of the fentanyl-related substances become legal.

We must permanently give law enforcement the tools they need to keep Americans safe. The HALT Fentanyl Act complements other solutions like the recently passed Secure the Border Act, which will help properly root out the flow of illicit drugs and limit supply.

Mr. Chair, I urge the bill's passage, which will represent another step toward restoring the voice of the American people in the House.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PFLUGER).

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of the HALT Fentanyl Act, which will help end thousands of deaths from this tragic situation.

I am speaking on behalf of parents like Joe Warnick and Donna Johnson of Odessa, Texas, who lost their son, Jackson, to fentanyl poisoning. I am speaking up for thousands of families across the United States.

How can you oppose this? Literally, how can you oppose this?

Every day we hear more and more stories of lives ended by fentanyl. It is our responsibility to act.

The HALT Fentanyl Act will help end the fentanyl crisis by cracking down on criminals who are trafficking deadly fentanyl across the southern border and into our communities. It will ensure law enforcement has the tools they need to keep these extremely lethal and dangerous drugs off our streets.

The moms and dads that I have talked to are tired of words. They want action, and the HALT Fentanyl Act is the action that we need to take. Lives are on the line.

Mr. Chair, I am very proud of my Republican Conference for proposing this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume to close.

The point that I have been trying to make and my colleagues have been trying to make on this side of the aisle is that Republicans continue to push punitive and partisan policies with regard to the opioid crisis rather than real solutions to address the substance abuse crisis, strengthen border security, or fix our immigration system.

The partisan HALT Fentanyl Act would not meaningfully address substance abuse. It would simply result in more incarceration.

This bill takes a one-sided approach by only requiring permanent class-wide scheduling of fentanyl-related substances in an attempt to incarcerate our way out of a public health crisis.

By contrast, the Biden administration has put forth an interagency proposal, which I have discussed, to permanently schedule synthetic fentanyl within schedule I without exacerbating existing sentencing disparities and inequities in our criminal justice system, as well as creating an off-ramp to remove or reschedule these substances shown to have medical or therapeutic value.

Now, I know that we hear from the other side: What have you done? What are you doing?

Well, the bottom line is that the Biden administration has taken aggressive action to combat the overdose epidemic. Congress and the administration should be working together on a bipartisan solution to address the fentanyl crisis, but the Republicans are threatening a default crisis right now that would seriously undermine these efforts.

Last year, the Biden administration announced its inaugural National Drug Control Strategy which expands access to lifesaving interventions, like naloxone and buprenorphine, while providing additional resources to law enforcement agencies to intercept illegal drugs.

To support this strategy and address illicit fentanyl, President Biden has called on Congress to make a historic investment of \$46 billion in funding for efforts to reduce the supply of illicit fentanyl and stop drug trafficking, as well as expand access to treatment and prevention to reduce overdose deaths across the country.

Now, at the same time, Republicans are threatening a default crisis unless Democrats go along with their drastic cuts that would seriously undermine our ability to combat the fentanyl and opioid crisis.

According to the administration, the cuts demanded by Republicans would force Border Patrol to ax more than 2,000 agents and drastically reduce funding for the DEA and the FBI. These things are crucial to interdiction and anti-drug-trafficking efforts.

The Republican proposal, the default on America act, would reduce funding for treatment for opioid use disorders resulting in thousands more Americans losing access to treatment and recovery. It would also threaten to take health insurance away from millions of low-income individuals, including those struggling with substance use disorders and the opioid epidemic, and it imposes a cruel and unnecessary work requirement on Medicaid.

Now, all we are trying to say on our side of the aisle is in this war on drugs, mandatory sentencing, incarcerate everybody, has not worked. It didn't



work for other drugs. It is not going to work for fentanyl.

At the same time, the Biden administration has put forward a proposal, and it has been put into bill form, the STOP Fentanyl Act, that looks at all of this and tries to increase treatment, tries to increase interdiction and help law enforcement, and tries to do more research to see to what extent we can find uses for synthetic fentanyl that actually will stop, if you will, or prevent overdoses from killing people.

We are just asking for a comprehensive approach. I haven't heard anything from the other side of the aisle that says you are going to do anything more than continue with the current law, which says that we are going to make synthetic fentanyl part of schedule I, which is already the law, at least until the end of next year.

All we are saying is, let's sit down and actually try to come up with something here on a bipartisan basis that is going to make a difference for this fentanyl crisis. What we have done in the past hasn't worked. If we are going to just reduce funding for all of these things, that is certainly not going to work. That is only going to make it worse.

I guess I am just pleading with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle: Rethink this. We have the time now to come up with a comprehensive approach that will make a difference here. If you pass this partisan bill, it is going to go nowhere in the Senate, it is not going to become law, and we will have accomplished nothing.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill, and let's look for a comprehensive solution along the line of what the President has proposed.

Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

My friend from New Jersey did say that this law expires at the end of the year. That is why we are here today to make scheduling illicit fentanyl permanent.

We have to understand what the status quo is. The status quo currently is horrific. Before these illicit fentanyls were scheduled, although we couldn't get them permanently scheduled, there were all kinds of analogues throughout America. That is why the DEA and others recommended that we schedule these, because once you change the fentanyl molecule, unless these are scheduled, then it becomes no longer illegal. These all appeared in our country, and that is why we are reacting to it. They are scheduled now, and what we are moving to do is to make it permanent.

What has happened since they were scheduled?

They came to me, and they talked about mass incarceration. We have heard that today. There have been eight people in prison under this law, four dealing with cartels, which I would say absolutely should be in prison.

I asked some of my law enforcement people when I was looking into this bill: If you have only arrested eight people, why does it matter?

That is what they are saying on the other side of the aisle.

What they said was the only reason we have only arrested eight people is because when this was put into place, the analogues—not fentanyl, but the analogues, which can be more dangerous—had disappeared from the marketplace. They are bringing in fentanyl that is already scheduled.

The problem is, if we treat fentanyl analogues differently than fentanyl, they are going to reappear again. That is why we have to put them in the same category. If you have fentanyl subject to mandatory minimums, but not these analogues, then they are going to reappear.

We have to pass this bill, we have to move forward, and I recommend support of this bill.

Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1845

The Acting CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GRIFFITH) having assumed the chair, Mr. D'ESPOSITO, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 467) to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to the scheduling of fentanyl-related substances, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

#### HONORING KELLE STRICKLAND ON HER RETIREMENT

(Mr. GUEST asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Kelle Strickland, who is retiring after 20 years of service to the House of Representatives.

Kelle is currently serving as my counsel on the Committee on Ethics and has spent two decades providing invaluable advice to Members and staff.

A native Alabamian, Kelle started her career on the Hill as an intern. She was quickly recognized as a leader and served for 6 years as the legislative director to former Congressman Jo Bonner. She served 5 years as chief of staff to Congressman MICHAEL BURGESS, 3 years as chief of staff in the Office of House Sergeant at Arms, and the last several years in her role as counsel to the ranking member and later chairman of the House Committee of Ethics.

I could not have been able to make the transition into my role at the Committee on Ethics without Kelle's guidance. She has served as a wealth of in-

stitutional knowledge and a trusted adviser to me since last August.

Kelle's presence in the House will be missed, but she will not go far. Kelle will continue to be a resource to the institution at the helm of the Congressional Institute, where she will undoubtedly enjoy continued success.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to join me in congratulating Kelle and thanking her for her many years of service.

#### IMPORTANCE OF LOAN FORGIVENESS IN BLACK COMMUNITIES

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the benefits of President Biden's student loan forgiveness plan for the Black community.

Today, American families struggle with the high costs of higher education. These financial burdens are even worse in Black communities.

Black college graduates owe \$25,000 more in student debt on average than White graduates, and they owe 12.5 percent more than they borrowed 4 years after graduating.

President Biden's plan would forgive \$10,000 to \$20,000 of student loan debt for eligible students. It would cut the loan balance for Black graduates nearly in half, and it would erase the debt for 25 percent of Black borrowers.

It is a great first step, but we must do more. We must increase debt forgiveness for students targeted by predatory for-profit colleges regardless, and we must create interest-free Federal student loans to lower the financial burdens of college.

These actions would help millions of Black graduates pay off their loans and get a fresh start.

#### CLOSE THE SOUTHERN BORDER

(Mr. GROTHMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, we received a briefing as to what was going on in the Russia-Ukraine war, and we heard of the callousness with which President Putin treats his own troops.

Indeed, 20,000 Russian troops recently died to take a city that was apparently of no important significance.

I thought, how could a President be so callous knowing that when one of these troops died, his parents, his siblings, and perhaps his children are left behind?

Then it occurred to me that here in the United States of America, we had 109,000 people die of illegal drugs last year, most of it fentanyl, and our President seems to be willing to do almost nothing.

Mr. Speaker, since almost all the drugs are coming across the southern border, with 109,000 people dying every year, wouldn't you figure it is a priority to close the border? No.