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(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

To require the Comptroller General of the United States to carry out a study on the trafficking into the United States of synthetic drugs, and related illicit finance, and for other purposes.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. DE LA CRUZ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**A BILL**

To require the Comptroller General of the United States to carry out a study on the trafficking into the United States of synthetic drugs, and related illicit finance, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Preventing the Financ-  
5 ing of Illegal Synthetic Drugs Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds the following:

1           (1) According to the Center for Disease Control  
2           and Prevention, over 107,000 people in the United  
3           States died from drug overdoses or drug poisonings  
4           in the 12-month period ending January 2022, with  
5           67 percent of those deaths involving synthetic  
6           opioids like fentanyl.

7           (2) According to the United National Office of  
8           Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in its “Synthetic Drug  
9           Strategy 2021-2025”, the number of synthetic  
10          drugs, also called New Psychoactive Substances, has  
11          increased 631 percent since 2009, with traffickers  
12          introducing an average of 80 new substances to the  
13          illicit drug market each year from 2009-2019.

14          (3) In October 2022, F. Michael McDaniel, di-  
15          rector of the Houston High Intensity Drug Traf-  
16          ficking Areas (HITDA) program testified in Con-  
17          gress that one kilogram of fentanyl can produce one  
18          million counterfeit pills containing one milligram of  
19          fentanyl, saying, “Currently in Houston, Texas, you  
20          can buy a kilogram of fentanyl for an average price  
21          of \$25,000 to \$30,000. This same kilogram of  
22          fentanyl in Culiacán (Mexico) could be purchased at  
23          an average price of \$13,500. Currently, the price of  
24          a fentanyl pill in Houston ranges from \$6 to \$65.

1       Therefore, an illicit investment of \$30,000 or less  
2       could result in a return of \$6 to \$32.5 million.”.

3           (4) According to Celina B. Realuyo, Adjunct  
4       Professor, The George Washington University Elliott  
5       School of International Affairs, in March 2022 Con-  
6       gressional testimony, “Financing is essential to sup-  
7       port and sustain the command and control, per-  
8       sonnel, arms, communications, logistics and oper-  
9       ations of organized crime groups. For this reason,  
10      following the money trail and depriving criminals of  
11      illicit financial flows can disrupt and disable these  
12      networks.”.

13   **SEC. 3. GAO STUDY ON SYNTHETIC DRUGS TRAFFICKING.**

14      (a) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the  
15      United States shall carry out a study on illicit financing  
16      in connection with the trafficking of synthetic drugs, in-  
17      cluding fentanyl and methamphetamine, fentanyl- and  
18      methamphetamine-related substances, Captagon, and  
19      fentanyl and methamphetamine precursors, including—

20           (1) the business of the trafficking of synthetic  
21      drugs and related illicit finance, such as the partici-  
22      pation of transnational criminal organizations and  
23      terror syndicates and their notable trafficking cor-  
24      ridors, including source and transit countries;

1           (2) the business models used by these  
2 transnational criminal organizations, including U.S.  
3 domestic and foreign activities for precursor pur-  
4 chase or production, movement along the supply  
5 chain, manufacture of the completed product, mar-  
6 keting, distribution, sales, and return of proceeds;

7           (3) the overlap of the business model of human  
8 trafficking and the trafficking of synthetic drugs  
9 and related illicit finance;

10          (4) the use of online illicit drug markets and  
11 the use of social media for the marketing, sale, and  
12 payment for synthetic drugs;

13          (5) financial methods used by such  
14 transnational criminal organizations, including—

15               (A) payment;

16               (B) money laundering; and

17               (C) repatriation of proceeds;

18          (6) the use of social media applications like  
19 Snap Chat, Discord, and Facebook and payment ap-  
20 plications like CashApp to facilitate financial trans-  
21 actions for synthetic drug trafficking, especially  
22 among young people; and

23          (7) U.S. Government activities to combat illicit  
24 finance related to the trafficking of synthetic drugs,  
25 including—

1 (A) interagency collaboration, including  
2 personnel detailed to other agencies to support  
3 the effort to combat synthetic drugs trafficking  
4 and related illicit finance;

5 (B) intergovernmental collaboration;

6 (C) intersectoral collaboration with the pri-  
7 vate sector, including the business and non-gov-  
8 ernmental communities; and

9 (D) identified gaps or resource deficiencies  
10 in combating the trafficking of synthetic drugs  
11 and related illicit finance in the coordination  
12 and collaboration activities described in sub-  
13 paragraphs (A) through (C).

14 (b) REPORT.—Not later than the end of the 1-year  
15 period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act, the  
16 Comptroller General shall issue a report to the Congress  
17 containing all findings and determinations made in car-  
18 rying out the study required under subsection (a).