

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 938

To establish the Joint Task Force to Counter the Illicit Synthetic Narcotics.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 11 (legislative day, MARCH 10), 2025

Mr. McCORMICK (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mrs. BRITT, and Mr. FETTERMAN)
introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the
Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To establish the Joint Task Force to Counter the Illicit
Synthetic Narcotics.

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 “Joint Task Force to
5 Counter Illicit Synthetic Narcotics Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The United States is experiencing a crisis
9 of substance abuse and addiction resulting in the
10 deaths of hundreds of thousands of people of the

1 United States. Most of these deaths involve some
2 form of opioids.

3 (2) There are many elements of Federal, State,
4 territorial, Tribal, and local governments working to
5 combat the opioid epidemic.

6 (3) No central entity exists at the appropriate
7 level whereby different agencies can share informa-
8 tion and coordinate efforts to combat the opioid cri-
9 sis.

10 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

11 In this Act:

12 (1) CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE; LISTED CHEM-
13 ICAL.—The terms “controlled substance” and “listed
14 chemical” have the meanings given the terms in sec-
15 tion 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21
16 U.S.C. 802).

17 (2) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means
18 the Director of the JTF–ISN.

19 (3) ILLICIT SYNTHETIC NARCOTIC.—The term
20 “illicit synthetic narcotic” means—

21 (A) a controlled substance with the excep-
22 tion of—

23 (i) a substance of natural origin; or

24 (ii) a medication—

1 (I) that is lawful under the laws
2 of the United States; and

3 (II) for which the Drug Enforce-
4 ment Administration has provided an
5 import permit to the importing orga-
6 nization for the import of the medica-
7 tion;

8 (B) a listed chemical; and

9 (C) an active pharmaceutical ingredient or
10 chemical that is used in the production of a
11 controlled substance or listed chemical in sub-
12 paragraphs (A) and (B).

13 (4) JTF–ISN.—The term “JTF–ISN” means
14 the Joint Task Force to Counter Illicit Synthetic
15 Narcotics established under section 4.

16 **SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT TASK FORCE TO**
17 **COUNTER ILLICIT SYNTHETIC NARCOTICS.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is established a Joint Task
19 Force to Counter Illicit Synthetic Narcotics.

20 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—The JTF–ISN shall be composed
21 of representatives of the following entities:

22 (1) The Department of Justice, including—

23 (A) the Drug Enforcement Administration;

24 (B) the Federal Bureau of Investigation;

25 and

1 (C) assistant United States attorneys and
2 trial attorneys, as the Director determines are
3 appropriate.

4 (2) The Department of the Treasury, includ-
5 ing—

6 (A) the Counter-Fentanyl Strike Force;

7 (B) the Internal Revenue Service Criminal
8 Investigation;

9 (C) the Financial Crimes Enforcement
10 Network;

11 (D) the Office of Foreign Assets Control;
12 and

13 (E) Office of Intelligence and Analysis.

14 (3) The Department of Homeland Security, in-
15 cluding—

16 (A) Homeland Security Investigations;

17 (B) U.S. Customs and Border Protection,
18 including the National Targeting Center;

19 (C) Immigration and Customs Enforce-
20 ment; and

21 (D) the United States Coast Guard.

22 (4) The Department of State.

23 (5) The Department of Commerce.

24 (6) The Department of Defense.

1 (7) The Office of the Director of National Intel-
2 ligence.

3 (8) Any other agency the Director deems appro-
4 priate.

5 (c) DIRECTOR.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—The JTF–ISN shall be led
7 by a Director who shall be appointed by the Presi-
8 dent, by and with the advice and consent of the Sen-
9 ate.

10 (2) COMPENSATION.—The Director shall be
11 compensated at the rate of basic pay prescribed for
12 level II of the Executive Schedule under section
13 5313 of title 5, United States Code.

14 (d) REPORTING.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall report to
16 the Attorney General.

17 (2) REPORTS AND BRIEFINGS.—Not later than
18 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act,
19 and every 180 days thereafter, the Director shall
20 submit to the Committee on the Judiciary and the
21 Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental
22 Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on the Ju-
23 diary and the Committee on Homeland Security of
24 the House of Representatives a report, and upon re-

1 quest of the chairman or ranking member of any
2 such committee, a briefing that includes—

3 (A) a comprehensive plan covering the 2-
4 year period beginning on the date on which the
5 report is submitted or the briefing is made, as
6 applicable, that includes—

7 (i) a description of the goals of the
8 JTF–ISN;

9 (ii) description of areas of improve-
10 ment with respect to collaboration among
11 the participating agencies; and

12 (iii) an estimate of the funding and
13 staff needed for the continued work of the
14 JTF–ISN;

15 (B) a statement of the budget priorities of
16 the JTF–ISN for each year in the 2-year pe-
17 riod;

18 (C) a description of the efforts of the
19 JTF–ISN to investigate and prosecute illicit
20 synthetic narcotics trafficking crimes, including
21 raids conducted, assets seized, assets forfeited
22 and indictments brought and convictions; and

23 (D) efforts of the JTF–ISN to address
24 matters related to the role of the People’s Re-
25 public of China in the opioids crisis.

1 **SEC. 5. PRIMARY MISSIONS OF JTF-ISN.**

2 The primary mission of the JTF-ISN shall be to di-
3 rect counter opioid and synthetic narcotics activities, in-
4 cluding disruption activities and associated investigations,
5 and provide strategic coordination on related activities, in-
6 cluding sanctions enforcement, conducting joint oper-
7 ations, raids, and other tactical actions in coordination
8 with Federal, State, territorial, Tribal, and local law en-
9 forcement agencies through memorandums of under-
10 standing such as legal actions against traffickers and for-
11 eign entities, particularly in the People's Republic of
12 China, complicit in the opioid trade.

13 **SEC. 6. AUTHORITY AND LIMITATIONS.**

14 (a) **AUTHORITY.**—The JTF-ISN shall be vested with
15 power and authority to—

16 (1) investigate and prosecute violations of Fed-
17 eral law relating to—

18 (A) the trafficking of illicit synthetic nar-
19 cotics and related offenses, such as money laun-
20 dering and other financial crimes; and

21 (B) smuggling, false statements, and any
22 matter that arises or might arises directly from
23 its investigations;

24 (2) in the case of a prosecution relating to non-
25 United States persons outside of the United States,
26 bring a case—

1 (A) in the district where the crime was
2 committed;

3 (B) in the district where the Drug En-
4 forcement Administration is located; or

5 (C) in a district described in section 3238
6 of title 18, United States Code;

7 (3) facilitate the sharing of information between
8 members of the JTF–ISN in a timely manner;

9 (4) establish protocols for interagency referrals
10 and procedures for referring cases to prosecuting
11 and sanctions designating authorities as appropriate;

12 (5) develop strategies to address the role of the
13 People’s Republic of China in the illicit synthetic
14 narcotics crisis;

15 (6) work cooperatively with State, territorial,
16 Tribal, and local law enforcement agencies to combat
17 and prosecute trafficking of illicit synthetic nar-
18 cotics;

19 (7) assess and improve existing methods of in-
20 vestigating and prosecuting illicit synthetic narcotics
21 trafficking crimes; and

22 (8) conduct direct operational activities, includ-
23 ing joint operations, raids, and other tactical ac-
24 tions, to disrupt illicit synthetic narcotics trafficking
25 networks and bring offenders to justice.

1 (b) LIMITATION.—The Director may not direct the
2 execution of operational activities outside the scope of
3 counter-opioid efforts related to illicit synthetic narcotics
4 suppliers and their networks pursuant to the primary mis-
5 sions of the JTF–ISN.

6 **SEC. 7. INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF JTF–ISN.**

7 (a) INTELLIGENCE COORDINATION.—The Director
8 shall establish and maintain within the JTF–ISN an intel-
9 ligence coordination element, which shall have primary re-
10 sponsibility within the United States Government for anal-
11 ysis of illicit synthetic narcotics and related trafficking or-
12 ganizations from all sources of intelligence, whether col-
13 lected inside or outside the United States.

14 (b) STRATEGIC OPERATIONAL PLANNING.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall establish
16 and maintain within the JTF–ISN a strategic oper-
17 ational planning element, which shall provide stra-
18 tegic operational plans for counter-opioid operations
19 conducted by the United States Government, and in-
20 clude the mission, objectives to be achieved, tasks to
21 be performed, interagency coordination of oper-
22 ational activities, and the assignment of roles and
23 responsibilities.

24 (2) MONITORING.—The Director shall monitor
25 the implementation of strategic operational plans

1 and shall obtain information from each element of
2 the intelligence community, and from each other de-
3 partment, agency, or element of the United States
4 Government relevant for monitoring the progress of
5 such entity in implementing such plans.

6 (c) OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL.—The Director
7 shall establish and maintain within the JTF–ISN an Of-
8 fice of General Counsel, which shall provide legal advice
9 in support of the JTF–ISN and its directorates.

10 (d) OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL COORDINATION.—
11 The Director shall establish and maintain within the
12 JTF–ISN an Office of Congressional Coordination, which
13 shall coordinate communications of the JTF–ISN with
14 Congress and ensure compliance with reporting and brief-
15 ing obligations under this Act.

16 **SEC. 8. RETENTION OF EXISTING AUTHORITIES.**

17 Each member of the JTF–ISN shall maintain their
18 existing authorities to investigate and prosecute traf-
19 ficking crimes relating to illicit synthetic narcotics.

20 **SEC. 9. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

21 Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize
22 the JTF–ISN to investigate, target, or prosecute individ-
23 uals for personal drug use or to pursue enforcement ac-

- 1 tions against low-level drug dealing that does not involve
- 2 significant connections to larger trafficking networks.

