



State of Connecticut

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Testimony in Support of House Bill 5524 Judiciary Committee April 3, 2019

Chairmen Stafstrom and Winfield, Ranking Members Rebimbas and Kissel and Members of the Judiciary Committee, I would like to thank the Committee for considering **House Bill 5524: An Act Increasing Penalties for the Sale of Fentanyl**.

H.B. 5524 is a House Republican Caucus proposal critical to combating Connecticut's ever-growing opioid epidemic. The bill amends the definition of "narcotic substance" to include fentanyl and fentanyl derivatives, thereby increasing penalties for dealing and manufacturing.

Fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid, first came to my attention as a problem in 2013 as reports began to circulate of widespread overdoses and deaths. Since then, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has tracked fatal overdoses and found that they have more than doubled in each successive year. In 2015, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency issued a nationwide alert about the dangers of fentanyl. "[O]ften laced in heroin, fentanyl and fentanyl analogues produced in illicit clandestine labs are up to 100 times more powerful than morphine and 30-50 times more powerful than heroin," going on to warn that fentanyl is the most potent and potentially lethal opioid available for use.

In late January, U.S. Customs and Border Protection ("CBP") made their largest-ever seizure of fentanyl at the border crossing of Nogales, Arizona. CBP officials noted that this shipment, had it not been seized, could have resulted in nearly 100,000,000 lethal doses nationwide.