

**For Immediate Release:**

December 11, 2019

**Contact:** Matt Baca -- (505) 270-7148

## **AG Balderas Joins Bipartisan Coalition of 56 Attorneys General in Calling for Fentanyl to Remain a Schedule I Drug**

*Santa Fe, NM*-- Attorney General Hector Balderas today joined a bipartisan coalition of 56 attorneys general from every state, territory, and the District of Columbia in calling for Congress to permanently classify fentanyl-related substances as Schedule I drugs. Schedule I drugs are defined as drugs with no currently accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse.

"The opioid epidemic has ravaged our communities and torn apart New Mexican families, so public officials must use every tool we can to prevent dangerous drugs from continuing this destruction," said Attorney General Balderas. "My office will continue to fight to ensure that New Mexico has the resources it needs to recover from the generations we have lost to this epidemic."

In the letter, the Attorneys General urge Congress to pass S. 2701, the Federal Initiative to Guarantee Health by Targeting (FIGHT) Fentanyl Act, a bipartisan bill introduced by U.S. Senators Rob Portman (R-OH) and Joe Manchin (D-WV).

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) issued a temporary scheduling order in February 2018 to schedule fentanyl-related substances that has allowed federal law enforcement authorities to bring criminal actions against individuals who manufacture, distribute or handle fentanyl-related substances. This scheduling order is set to expire less than two months from now on Feb. 6, 2020. The FIGHT Fentanyl Act codifies DEA precedent to schedule fentanyl-related substances and will ensure law enforcement agencies and courts retain the tools needed to keep those who traffic in this deadly substance off the streets.

In the most recent data available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there were 72,000 drug-related deaths in the United States in 2017. Of those deaths, roughly 40% involved fentanyl or a fentanyl-related compound.

Attorneys general from every state, territory and the District of Columbia signed the letter. A copy of the letter is attached.

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December 11, 2019

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Committee on the Judiciary  
290 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Sen. Diane Feinstein  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Re: S. 2701 – Federal Initiative to Guarantee Health by Targeting (FIGHT) Fentanyl Act

Dear Senators Graham and Feinstein,

We write today to offer our collective support for S. 2701, the Federal Initiative to Guarantee Health by Targeting (FIGHT) Fentanyl Act.

As you are likely aware, the Drug Enforcement Agency's (DEA) temporary order classifying fentanyl-related compounds as Schedule I drugs is set to expire on February 6, 2020. The FIGHT Fentanyl Act would codify this temporary order, keeping fentanyl-related substances classified as Schedule I drugs.

In the most recent data available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there were 72,000 drug-related deaths in the United States in 2017. Of those deaths, roughly 40% involved fentanyl or a fentanyl-related compound.

Just last month, a coalition of local, state, and federal agencies in Ohio intercepted over 20 kilograms of fentanyl, 1.5 kilograms of methamphetamine, and half a kilogram of heroin. Further testing revealed that the 20 kilograms of fentanyl were laced with carfentanil, which can be over 100 times more potent than fentanyl. The potency of the fentanyl-related substances in this single bust was enough to kill every man, woman, and child in the state of Ohio several times over.

This legislation is crucial to federal and state efforts to curb the opioid epidemic nationally and within each individual state. It is for these reasons that we commend Senators Portman and Manchin for their leadership in bringing forward this important legislation, and we urge you to take up and pass S. 2701 before the DEA's temporary order expires.

Yours,

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Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: (202) 326-6000  
<http://www.naag.org/>



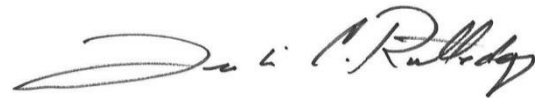
Dana Nessel  
Michigan Attorney General



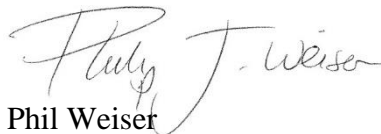
Steve Marshall  
Alabama Attorney General



Talauega Eleasalo V. Ale  
American Samoa Attorney General



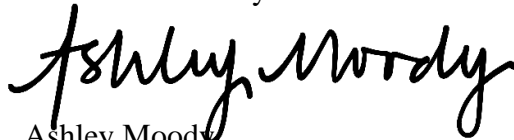
Leslie Rutledge  
Arkansas Attorney General



Phil Weiser  
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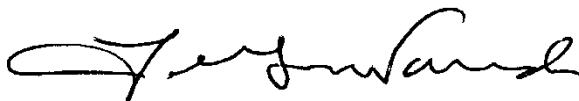
Kathleen Jennings  
Delaware Attorney General



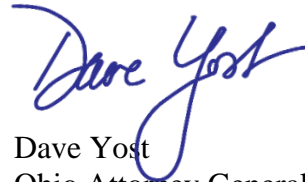
Ashley Moody  
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Leevin Taitano Camacho  
Guam Attorney General



Lawrence Wasden  
Idaho Attorney General



Dave Yost  
Ohio Attorney General



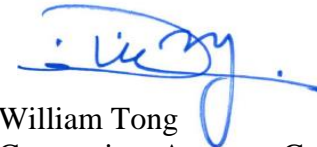
Kevin G. Clarkson  
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Mark Brnovich  
Arizona Attorney General



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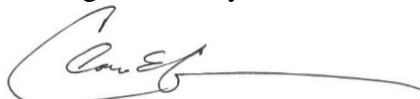
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Georgia Attorney General



Clare E. Connors  
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Kwame Raoul  
Illinois Attorney General



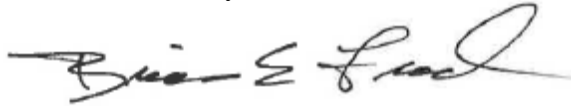
Curtis T. Hill, Jr.  
Indiana Attorney General



Derek Schmidt  
Kansas Attorney General



Jeff Landry  
Louisiana Attorney General



Brian Frosh  
Maryland Attorney General



Keith Ellison  
Minnesota Attorney General



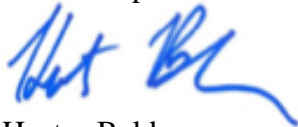
Eric S. Schmitt  
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Douglas Peterson  
Nebraska Attorney General



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Hector Balderas  
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Tom Miller  
Iowa Attorney General



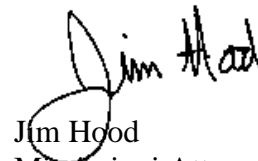
Andy Beshear  
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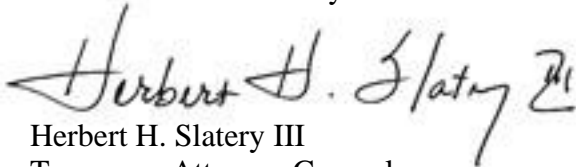
Ellen F. Rosenblum  
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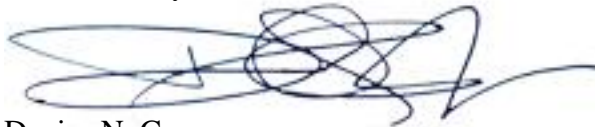
Alan Wilson  
South Carolina Attorney General



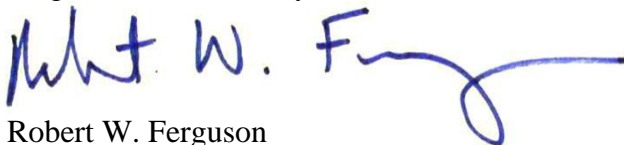
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Tennessee Attorney General



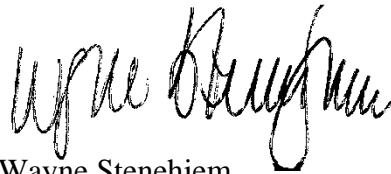
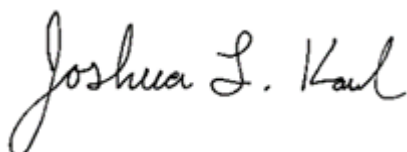
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Wayne Stenehjem  
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Mike Hunter  
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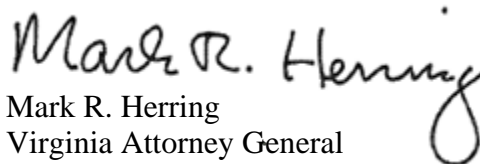
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Cc: Senator Rob Portman  
Senator Joe Manchin