

**Congressman Richard Hudson**

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD**

**Energy & Commerce Health Sub Hearing: The Overdose Crisis:**

**Interagency Proposal to Combat to Illicit Fentanyl-Related**

**Substance**

**Date: Thursday, December 2, 2021 at 10:30 AM**

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD:**

**I want to thank Chairwoman Eshoo and Ranking Member Guthrie for holding this important hearing, and thank our expert witnesses for their time and testimony.**

**This is an incredibly important and timely topic to be discussing today.**

**In my State of North Carolina, we saw a nearly 37% increase in overdose cases over the past year.**

**Since 2000, over 28,000 North Carolinians have died from drug overdoses. For the year 2020 – this means that over eight North Carolinians have died each and every day.**

**And it's not just North Carolina – the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) confirm that over 100,000 people in the United States will die from an overdose by the end of 2021 – if not before.**

**This is unacceptable.**

**Opioids appear to largely be the source of these deaths. The National Institutes of Health estimated that 79% of the deaths in North Carolina involved opioids. And the vast majority of these drugs have been laced with fentanyl.**

**The same fentanyl that is flooding our borders in the thousands of pounds.**

**Our U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) seized more fentanyl by mid-2021 than in all of 2020 combined.**

**Our own North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services has confirmed the spikes we are seeing in overdose deaths are largely due to supply chain issues and an increase in contaminated drugs.**

**Earlier this year, I went to our southern border to witness the crisis occurring firsthand. At just one station, border agents told me they**

**had seized 55 pounds of fentanyl so far this year. For perspective – that is enough to kill up to 10 million Americans. This is the entire population of North Carolina.**

**My trip was in April. Since then, and as of this hearing, CBP has seized enough fentanyl at the border in the last year to kill every man, woman, and child in the U.S. not just once, but seven times over.**

**This is absolutely unacceptable.**

**And while this number itself is difficult to comprehend, the most terrifying aspect is the unknown. In my conversation with the border section chief, he fully acknowledged these official numbers are only a drop in the bucket.**

**Drug traffickers have become strategic and calculated in their work – they coordinate and manipulate the timing of migrant crossings with the drugs coming through to divert border agents' attention.**

**We must acknowledge the alarming reality of the unknown hundreds or thousands of pounds of these dangerous drugs that are flowing across our border.**

**Earlier this year, the DEA's order that temporarily placed fentanyl-related substances in Schedule I was set to expire on May 6, 2021.**

**As a cosponsor of HR 2430, the Temporary Reauthorization of the Emergency Scheduling of Fentanyl Analogues Act, I was supportive of Ranking Member Cathy McMorris Rodgers' efforts to further this reauthorization through May 2022.**

**Unfortunately, Congress has only acted to extend the order through January 28, 2022.**

**Again, this is unacceptable.**

**We must extend this reauthorization to protect the lives of the American people and show drug traffickers we will not stand idly by while they continue to infiltrate our borders and lives.**

**I look forward to the discussion today, and remain committed to working with my colleagues on the Health Subcommittee and on both sides of the aisle to address this crisis not only in North Carolina, but nationwide.**