

Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Health Subcommittee Mark Up 3.8.23
Opening Statement
As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you to all my colleagues who are leading on bills today.

Together, we are taking action to address the illicit fentanyl crisis, protect the 9-8-8 suicide and crisis lifeline, and stop discrimination against people with disabilities.

HALT / BLOCK / TITLE 42

More people than ever are dying of fentanyl poisonings.

As many parents have appealed to us... this requires urgent action.

Moms like Molly Cain deserve justice.

We must secure the border and do everything in our power to make sure law enforcement has the tools they need to seize fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances.

That is why we are advancing Representative Griffith and Latta's HALT Fentanyl Act... and Representative Lesko and Miller-Meeks's bill, the Securing the Border for Public Health Act.

The HALT Fentanyl Act would permanently place fentanyl-related substances into Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act... and make sure law enforcement can keep these weapons-grade poisons off our streets.

DEA testified just last month that permanently scheduling fentanyl related substances in Schedule I is their number-one legislative priority...

... and in our field hearing in McAllen, we all heard and saw why.

The Securing the Border for Public Health Act would expand current Title 42 authority to be used to stop the import of certain controlled substances, including fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances.

I want to be very clear. The Biden administration cannot let the emergency scheduling expire and it should not lift Title 42.

If the Biden administration continues its open border agenda...

...Mexican cartels like the one that just kidnapped four Americans and killed two of them... will be even more emboldened.

I urge us all to come together to save lives, halt fentanyl, stop the criminals pushing these poisons, and secure our border.

OPIOID BILL

I also want to recognize Rep. Harshbarger for leading on the Block, Report, And Suspend Suspicious Shipments Act.

The opioid epidemic was fueled, in part, by suspiciously large shipments of controlled substances being delivered across the country – particularly in the Appalachian region.

This bill would help stop this practice and save lives by requiring drug manufacturers and distributors that discover a suspicious order for controlled substances to halt the order and report the information to DEA.

988

Additionally, the 9-8-8 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline suffered a cyberattack and was shut down for several hours late last year.

This lifeline is a critical tool that provides support and hope to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.

We don't yet know the magnitude of the individuals impacted by the outage, but we must make sure that it doesn't happen again.

Thank you, Rep. Obernolte, for your work on the 9-8-8 Lifeline Cybersecurity Responsibility Act. It requires coordination and reporting to improve cybersecurity protections for the 9-8-8 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

QALY

Lastly, regarding my legislation to ban the use of Quality Adjusted Life Years – or QALYs – and other similar measures by state and federal government health care programs.

More than 70 disability and patient organizations agree that QALYs are discriminatory and have no place in our decision making.

Imagine having to beg the government for a drug for your son with a progressive disease.

Imagine being told by the government his life isn't worth the cost of his medication.

Or being told your child with Down syndrome, has a life less worthy of saving and therefore the government won't cover the cost of an organ transplant.

The federal government can evaluate the effectiveness of treatments and cures without devaluing the lives of seniors and people with disabilities.

I'll have an amendment to reflect feedback from HHS and other stakeholders to ensure that my bill will achieve its goals, and I hope that it will be recommended with broad support to the full committee.

CLOSING

At the center of all these bills today.... the Energy and Commerce Committee is leading to affirm that every life is worth living.

For those in despair, we are offering hope.

For a brighter and more secure future for all, it is critical we continue to make progress on these bills in today's subcommittee.

I look forward to our discussion and the work to come for the People's House to take action these solutions.

Thank you and I yield back.