

Congressman Brett Guthrie Opening Statement – 06/09/2023

As Prepared for Delivery

Thanks to everyone for being here today at such a historic site to address such a significant issue facing every single American household. Gettysburg represents a turning point in our nation's history. I hope similarly, that this hearing—and the underling efforts—can represent a turning point in the overdose crisis, which continues to tragically claim the lives of hundreds of thousands of Americans in recent years, more recently reaching a historic high of 107,000 overdose deaths in 2022.

For context, a little over 33,000 Americans lost their lives to drug overdose in 2015, a shocking 224% growth in drug overdose deaths in less than a decade. In my home state of Kentucky, we saw 14% growth in overdose rates between 2020 and 2021, and illicit fentanyl contributed to over 70% of those overdoses in both years.

This Committee has acted on a number of occasions, in a bipartisan fashion, to address the overdose crisis, through our work in passing the CARA, the 21st Century Cures Act, the SUPPORT Act, the Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-being Act, and most recently the HALT Fentanyl Act.

Today we continue this work and will examine the SUPPORT Act, landmark legislation overwhelmingly passed in House in 2018 and signed into by President Trump. The law is responsible for improving access to alternative pain management therapies for seniors, greater access to medication assisted treatment for vulnerable populations, and comprehensive wrap-around treatment and recovery support resources for those seeking to overcome their addictions.

This also included my Comprehensive Opioid Recovery Centers Act, a program that focused on delivering targeted services to communities hardest hit by the opioid epidemic. I've introduced legislation to reauthorize this important program and look forward to working with my colleagues on the committee to ensure Americans continue to have access to these services.

Over the next few weeks and months, we will dive further into the policies of the SUPPORT Act, to better understand what is working and what isn't and to reauthorize key provisions of the law that are set to expire this year.

In closing, I want to personally thank Dr. Joyce for hosting us here today. He's worked tirelessly during his time in Congress to address the ongoing overdose crisis and I know his work won't stop until this crisis ends.

Thank you, and I yield back.