

Chairman H. Morgan Griffith Opening Statement
Subcommittee on Health
Policies to Protect Our Communities From Illicit Drug Threats
Thursday, March 26, 2026 – 2:00 PM

As prepared for delivery.

In today's hearing we will discuss fourteen bills aimed at protecting Americans from illicit drug threats.

Illicit drugs continue to pose a serious and evolving challenge to American safety and national security—fueling overdose deaths, increasing crime, and putting immense pressure on law enforcement and public health systems.

So far this Congress, we have gotten strong policies across the finish line to crack down on the illicit drugs crisis that we see across the country. However, there is still more to be done to protect our communities from these lethal substances.

This is an issue that affects particularly Virginia, and Appalachia, who have unfortunately been impacted by the opioid epidemic.

I hear countless stories across my district of individuals taking illicit drugs and mixing them with drugs we will be discussing today like xylazine and fentanyl. Many of these illicit drugs are coming from illegal pill presses often with ingredients coming from China.

Our local law enforcement have been on the front lines battling this crisis and this hearing will give us the opportunity to build on the work this subcommittee did in passing the HALT Fentanyl Act, led by myself and Mr. Latta, and the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act, led by Chairman Guthrie.

The President signed both of these pieces of legislation into law last year.

We will examine H.R. 1266, the Combatting Illicit Xylazine Act, led by Representative Pfluger from Texas. This bill would classify Xylazine as Schedule III under the Controlled Substances Act, while also protecting its legitimate use in large animal veterinary medicine.

This is extremely important for my district because, according to the National Cattlemen's Association, Virginia's Ninth District is the largest cattle-producing Congressional district east of the Mississippi River.

H.R. 5630, an important data collection issue that is championed by Representative Houchin from Indiana, would require enhanced data collection and reporting for opioid use disorder diversion data as part of a State's plans for their Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services block grants.

H.R. 2004 Tyler's Law is led by Representative Latta from Ohio.

The bill would require the Department of Health and Human Services to complete a study on how frequently hospitals test for fentanyl in patients experiencing an overdose and then use its results to issue guidance on implementing fentanyl testing in emergency rooms.

Also introduced by Representative Latta is H.R. 7970, the Strengthening Tools to Outlaw Poisonous (STOP) Nitazenes Act, which would permanently schedule nitazenes as Schedule I controlled substances.

H.R. 8000, the End Needless Distribution (END) of 7-OH Act led by Representative Bilirakis from Florida would regulate synthetic versions of 7-OH as a Schedule I controlled substance.

The Preventing Rogue and Equipment for Synthetic Substances (PRESS) Act, H.R. 7184 introduced by Representative McDowell from North Carolina and would criminalize the intentional importation of unlisted precursor chemicals and related equipment used to manufacture controlled substances.

H.R. 8005, the Stop Pills that Kill Act, introduced by Representative Evans from Colorado, would implement new penalties and close a sentencing loophole for counterfeit pill production.

Representative Hageman from Wyoming champions H.R. 5880, the Fight Illicit Pill Presses Act, which would add a serialization requirement for pill presses and punches.

H.R. 1227, the Alternatives to Prevent Addiction in the Nation (or PAIN) Act led by Representative Miller Meeks from Iowa and Representative Barragan from California, which I am a cosponsor of, would expand access for seniors to non-opioid pain management options in Medicare Part D.

H.R. 2715, the Destruction of Hazardous Imports Act introduced by Representatives Higgins and Carter from Louisiana, would grant the FDA authority to destroy any FDA-regulated products that pose a significant risk to U.S. public health at our ports.

We will also be discussing other bills that deal with addressing this illicit drug issue and while some of these bills may need further work, it is critical that we continue to look for ways to restrict access to lethal and dangerous substances in order to protect American lives, strengthen public safety, and prevent further harm to families and communities nationwide.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses before us and to the discussion.