



TO:

United States House Committee on Ways and Means
Chairman Kevin Brady
Ranking Member Richard Neal
Subcommittee on Trade Chairman David Reichert
Subcommittee on Trade Ranking Member Bill Pascrell

RE: Protecting Our Communities by Stopping the Flow of Synthetic Opioids in the International Mail System

Thank you for your continued leadership on the House Ways and Means Committee and your collective efforts to stop the abuse of the international supply chain that is helping to fuel the nationwide opioid crisis.

Because there is a gaping loophole in the international postal system that continues to provide an accessible pipeline for foreign drug traffickers to ship deadly opioids into the United States, we wholeheartedly support current efforts in Congress to pass the bipartisan, bicameral Synthetics Trafficking & Overdose Prevention (STOP) Act, S.372/H.R.1057. This legislation requires mail shipped through foreign posts to send the same advance electronic data (AED) as private carriers. The STOP Act mandates that all posts abide by the same customs and security protocols that are imposed on all other importers into the United States. In Congress, the STOP Act has 271 bipartisan cosponsors in the House of Representatives and 32 in the Senate, a bipartisan feat in any age – but especially in today’s environment.

Unfortunately, there are current attempts to bypass this legislation altogether with a weakened substitute. Congress must act to close this loophole now. The provisions of the STOP Act that require that transmission of this important data on all packages entering the United States are essential to the bill and to closing the postal loophole. Without them, law enforcement will be left without the tools they need to do their job.

After 16 years of inaction and an opioid crisis that shows no signs of slowing down, we cannot afford to abandon the STOP Act, which has incredible bipartisan support with a substitute that does not solve the problem.

We’ve seen many examples of why it is important to pass the STOP Act now. According to a recent report from the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (PSI), the United States Postal Service delivers nearly a half billion packages from abroad each year, but only 36 percent include the advance electronic data used by law enforcement to screen and stop dangerous material, including drugs like fentanyl. Furthermore, the limited data included with this 36 percent are too low quality to be useful. Packages shipped by private carriers, on the other hand, are mandated to collect AED.

As a result of this loophole, the PSI report found that online drug traffickers actually prefer and recommend using foreign postal networks to send foreign drugs into the U.S. to avoid detection. The investigation also linked online sellers in China to seven opioid-related deaths in the U.S. and 18 arrests for drug-related offenses.

These findings were echoed in the final report of the President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis. The commission called for the passage of the STOP Act to help address the supply chain in the opioid epidemic.

As the first Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security under George W. Bush and a former Assistant Secretary at the Department of Homeland Security, respectively, our jobs were to keep the American people safe. We hope that, as members of Congress, your committee has the same perspective and is willing to take all necessary actions to address this threat.

The STOP Act must be moved through the Committee without any weakening or provisions that render it toothless. Congress must capitalize on this opportunity to ensure that the bills being considered will have meaningful impact. Too many lives are dependent on fixing this glaring loophole. We urge you to do all in your power to pass it without revision.

Thank you for all that you do and for your important work on this effort.

Sincerely,

Americans for Securing All Packages