

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

CAUCUS ON
INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL

UNITED STATES SENATE

FIELD HEARING IN DES MOINES

Thursday, October 27, 2022

Des Moines, Iowa

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1 FIELD HEARING IN DES MOINES

2
3 Thursday, October 27, 2022

4
5 U.S. Senate
6 Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control
7 Des Moines, Iowa
8

9 The caucus met, pursuant to notice, at 9:58 a.m., in
10 U.S. District Court, Southern District of Iowa, 123 E Walnut
11 St., Des Moines, Iowa, Hon. Charles Grassley, ranking member
12 of the caucus, presiding.

13 Present: Senator Grassley [presiding].
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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR GRASSLEY

2 Senator Grassley. [Technical problems] -- call to
3 order. This is a hearing of the International Drug Control
4 Caucus, more commonly known in the Senate as the Senate Drug
5 Caucus. We are here for a very, very serious problem that
6 America faces, and I presume to some extent a large share of
7 this globe faces, the distribution of fentanyl and the
8 deaths and trials and tribulations it creates for families.

9 I am going to be referring to such a small amount of
10 fentanyl that can kill. And this isn't much of a
11 demonstration to hold up, but the few grains of salt that
12 are in here, because I could not procure the actual fentanyl
13 to show you, but 15 or 16 grains of salt, the equivalent of
14 the amount of fentanyl that can kill.

15 And I am just going to show this once, but I thought we
16 ought to have a picture of how little amount can kill.
17 Sebastian Kidd was 17 when he died from fentanyl poisoning.
18 Hadn't even graduated from high school. That didn't stop a
19 dealer on Snapchat from selling him a fake pill laced with
20 fentanyl. We should protect kids from these predators. So
21 how do adults peddling deadly drugs like fentanyl prey upon
22 Iowa's teenagers?

23 Today's hearing is going to explore how it happens and
24 how we can prevent it from happening. Sebastian Kidd's
25 story is very sadly not the only story like this. Devin

1 Anderson was 23 and Bailey Arwine was 22 when they died from
2 fentanyl poisoning. Like Sebastian, they didn't know that
3 they were taking fentanyl.

4 Kidd, Andersen, Arwine's families are here today to
5 tell us about their boys. They are here to remind all of us
6 that the 470 Iowans who died last year because of drugs
7 aren't just a simple statistic. Their names, their
8 families, and their stolen futures. So thank you to these
9 families for being here and for fighting for public response
10 that goes beyond just an offer of condolences.

11 Pictured are 55 Americans lost to fentanyl whose
12 families are working with the Kidd's organization,
13 becometheirvoice.org. They come from all over the country.
14 These victims are just a small representation of the over
15 70,000 lives lost to opioids last year. Most were lost to
16 fentanyl and its related substances. In a few weeks to
17 come, important fentanyl legislation may come to a vote in
18 the United States Senate.

19 That is why we need to have this hearing now. We all
20 know how cheap fentanyl is, how addictive it is, and its
21 high wears off fast. It doesn't grow in a field. Fentanyl
22 is typically made in Mexican cartel owned labs with
23 chemicals bought from China. With a small tweak, it can
24 fall outside of the legal definition of "fentanyl" in the
25 Controlled Substances Act. And just 3 milligrams, as I

1 showed you, the equivalent of about 10 or 15 grains of table
2 salt, could kill a grown man.

3 Fentanyl often arrives in the U.S. through the
4 Southwest border. That is where the Department of Homeland
5 Security took these photos that you are seeing now, etched
6 in natural car voids, strapped on people's bodies, and
7 stuffed in their clothes. This year alone, Border Patrol
8 seized about 12,860 pounds of fentanyl. But we know that is
9 only a very tiny fraction of the fentanyl that makes it into
10 the U.S.

11 In 2021, the Drug Enforcement Administration seized
12 enough fentanyl to kill every American. That is fentanyl
13 that made it through our borders despite Border Patrol's
14 efforts, their very best efforts. From the border,
15 America's highways provide an easy transportation network
16 for the cartels. It is about a 17 hour drive from the
17 Southwest border to Des Moines, where we are. It doesn't
18 even take a full day. It is just a straight shot up 35
19 nowadays, every State then becomes a border State.

20 Anyone following the news has seen the warnings to stay
21 away from fentanyl, to be careful what objects you pick up
22 and what your kids may mistake as candy. While Americans
23 rightfully heed those warnings, the men and women represent
24 -- represented by our law enforcement panel race towards the
25 threat.

1 We want to thank all of them for our service like we
2 should be thanking all law enforcement people. The
3 following video shows what is happening on the frontlines in
4 the fight against fentanyl. This is about a three minute
5 video, so please be patient.

6 [Video Shown.]

7 Senator Grassley. Well, you see a lot of heart
8 breaking stories there. Stories of lost children. These
9 stories deserve our attention. That is why we are here
10 today. We need to do what we can to prevent other families
11 from experiencing these same losses. This hearing is a step
12 forward in meeting that obligation.

13 Now I am going to introduce our first panel, a panel of
14 parents and friends and relatives of the people I just
15 mentioned. Today we will hear two panels of witness, so I
16 am going to introduce the first one, Deric Kidd.

17 Mr. Kidd is here representing the Kidd family. They
18 lost their son Sebastian to fentanyl poisoning on July 30th,
19 2021. Sebastian was just 17 years old. The Kidds have
20 spent their whole lives in Iowa. Mr. Kidd is a mortgage
21 banker. His wife, Cathy, works real estate with their
22 daughter Paige. While most siblings have their differences,
23 Paige and Sebastian were extremely close.

24 They were a family of four that enjoyed family board
25 games, fishing trips, and camping ventures. Brooke

1 Anderson, the next witness. Ms. Anderson is here to
2 represent the Anderson family. They lost Devin to fentanyl
3 poisoning, February 24th, 2022, when Devin was just 23 years
4 old. Devin was close to his family. He spoke to his mom
5 nearly every day about his friends or work.

6 Sometimes he would text her just telling her a joke.
7 He loved to tease his younger siblings. Devin had three
8 brothers and one sister. Mr. Anderson has spent her whole
9 -- Ms. Anderson has spent her whole life in Iowa, where she
10 works with individuals who have intellectual disabilities.

11 Laurie Arwine. Ms. Arwine also joins us today from the
12 Arwine family to talk about her son, Bailey. He was born
13 and raised here in Iowa. Ms. Arwine grew up on a farm in
14 Dunkerton that her dad still farms to this day. She met her
15 husband, Hans, at Dunkerton High School. They have been
16 married for 36 years and have three children, including
17 Bailey. Bailey died of fentanyl poisoning on April 4th,
18 2022. He was 22 years old.

19 So I know it is hard for you folks to come here and
20 tell us your story, but by telling your story, you will be
21 helping bring this terrible problem that we are discussing
22 today to the attention of more people and hopefully save a
23 lot of children, young people, or even adults that don't
24 know about this serious problem and prevent some deaths.

25 We will hear from Mr. Kidd first, then for Ms.

1 Anderson, and then for Mr. Arwine. Would you please
2 proceed.

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1 STATEMENT OF DERIC KIDD, FATHER OF SEBASTIAN KIDD

2 Mr. Kidd. Thank you, Senator Grassley. Thank you for
3 inviting us today. My name is Deric Kidd. My wife Kathy
4 and I are the co-founders of becomingtheirvoice.org and
5 Advocates for the Lost Voices of Fentanyl. Our son,
6 Sebastian Alexander Kidd, was entering his high school,
7 senior year in high school.

8 He was a multi-sport athlete, active in church, played
9 the saxophone, loved hunting and fishing, and was a master
10 on the grill. He was a friend, a cousin, a brother, a son.
11 He was known for his beautiful smile -- I am sorry,
12 beautiful eyes, infectious smile, and wonderful heart.

13 A truly beautiful person who put others first. Our son
14 suffered multiple traumas in his life. He was a child of
15 divorce, abandoned by his birth mother at age 11. Lost
16 three grandparents to cancer. Severely bullied and falsely
17 labeled in school. He broke his collarbone his freshman
18 year and also suffered multiple concussions.

19 He was diagnosed with anxiety and depression and was
20 put on medication for all of these reasons. Our son went
21 through absolute hell and still put a smile on his face
22 every day. At some point he was introduced to Percocet by a
23 friend. He began self-medicating with pills purchased
24 through Snapchat. He didn't know the pills were fake or
25 contained fentanyl. He couldn't stop taking them.

1 However, after his death, we were told by some of his
2 friends that he encouraged them to quit taking the pills.
3 You see, it was important for him to save others because he
4 knew their pain, but he couldn't save himself. On July
5 30th, 2021, he took half a pill before bed, and he never
6 woke up. We found our son slumped over his bed the next
7 morning. That image will haunt me for life.

8 He was supposed to leave that day for a long awaited
9 trip to Arizona with his aunt and uncle. He never made it.
10 He didn't want to die. If the half pill that he took had
11 actually been Percocet, he would still be here. He would
12 still have a chance. Now, let me tell you what I lost. I
13 lost a piece of me that day.

14 The boy that I raised to be a man, to always do the
15 right thing, to stand up for people, to put others first and
16 love everyone, to respect his elders and to treat everyone
17 with kindness. I lost the boy I coached in soccer for ten
18 years, knowing that when his senior year came they would
19 make a run at the State championship.

20 I lost proudly walking with him on senior night with
21 his arms around his mom and me, watching him get ready for
22 prom, and walk down the aisle to get his diploma. I lost
23 seeing my son and daughter go from having a love, hate
24 relationship to being two of the closest siblings you could
25 ever imagine.

1 I lost hearing the constant laughter, bantering, and
2 sarcasm between them. I lost seeing him get married and
3 giving my speech at his wedding, telling him that marriage
4 and love are hard but worth every second.

5 I lost seeing him dance with his mama, seeing my son's
6 face when he had his first child, knowing he was going to be
7 a better father than I ever was, knowing that my wife will
8 never -- will likely never hold a grandchild in her arms
9 because now our daughter doesn't want to have kids anymore.

10 We not only lost a child that day, we lost our future
11 grandkids. I lost the moment when he would beat me in a
12 round of golf for the first time. The joy and peace I
13 experienced with my fishing buddy on those brisk early
14 mornings. Seeing him age gracefully and watching him grow
15 up with his own children.

16 The most important thing I lost were the talks we had,
17 the slow transition for me giving advice to my son, to me
18 taking it from him. With no disrespect to my wife and
19 daughter, I lost everything that day because I cannot be the
20 man that I was or the man that I wanted to be with such a
21 huge part of me gone.

22 The three of us are left to pick up the pieces and try
23 and put this puzzle back together but we are always going to
24 be missing one piece. All these families across the nation
25 are experiencing their own pain. All we can do is turn our

1 pain into purpose, which is why I created the Become Their
2 Voice website.

3 It is a place where we can tell their stories and show
4 their beautiful faces. We give presentations in schools and
5 youth groups to educate the public in hopes of preventing
6 this from happening to others, to make sure their deaths
7 weren't for nothing. We all do it to save lives. We came
8 here today to speak on our son's behalf and let his voice be
9 heard.

10 But more importantly, we came here today to speak on
11 behalf of those that cannot be heard, the other grieving
12 families and victims. This is an endless cycle. This isn't
13 just about our son or any of the lost loved ones we are
14 mentioning here today.

15 It isn't just about the hundreds of thousands of
16 Americans that we have lost over the years and continue to
17 lose every day. It is also about the collateral damage left
18 behind. It is about my wife who deals with the guilt and
19 grief daily. It is about my daughter who struggles to
20 function some days because of her pain and guilt.

21 It is about my son's friends who have chosen to self-
22 medicate because they are struggling with his death. I have
23 taken phone calls from parents because their kids have since
24 started to self-medicate.

25 One of them even overdosed. You see, it isn't just one

1 death. Each one trickles down and touches the lives of
2 dozens, if not hundreds of people. Now they have to deal
3 with the pain and the grief and the inner turmoil, which may
4 cause them to self-medicate and suffer the same fate.

5 There is much work to be done. Thank you.

6 [The prepared statement of Mr. Kidd follows:]
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1 Senator Grassley. Thank you, Mr. Kidd. Now, Ms.

2 Anderson.

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1 STATEMENT OF BROOKE ANDERSON, MOTHER OF DEVIN ANDERSON

2 Ms. Anderson. Good morning. My name is Brooke
3 Anderson. I am the mother of Devin Anderson, who was found
4 deceased in his bedroom on the morning of February 24th of
5 this year. His toxicology analysis showed that he did not
6 have any other drugs in his body other than fentanyl and
7 nicotine. Prior to my son's death, I had never heard
8 anything about synthetic fentanyl in the United States.

9 The hearts of Devin's family members have been
10 completely shattered by his devastating loss. I attend
11 mental health therapy as well as both of my younger two
12 children now. I am here to tell you that Devin's struggles
13 were not a death sentence until he discovered a counterfeit
14 pill called M30. The spread of fentanyl has been steady and
15 deadly in Iowa and across the United States.

16 The CDC estimates that more than 108,000 people in the
17 United States died of drug overdoses between February 2021
18 and February 2022. Of those, more than 70 percent involved
19 fentanyl and other synthetic opioids. This is a national
20 emergency, and America's young adults are being deceived and
21 poisoned every five minutes.

22 My son Devin was well known for his contagious
23 laughter, his smile, his love for the Dallas Cowboys, and
24 also the Iowa Hawkeyes. He loved cats, spending time with
25 his friends and family, listening to music, and playing

1 video games. He was kind, caring, a hard worker, and very
2 laid back.

3 While growing up as a child and throughout his teenage
4 years in high school, he was active in football, soccer, and
5 wrestling. After high school, he continued to be active
6 playing golf during the summer months and playing in a
7 softball tournament every 4th of July with his dad. He
8 enjoyed watching football and hanging out with friends
9 regularly.

10 Devin had worked hard and had a full time job since he
11 was 16 years old, and prior to his death, he had just been
12 given a raise by his employer. Despite his supportive
13 family, many friendships, hard work, and solid earnings, he
14 struggled with the transition from being a teen to a young
15 adult. In 2020, I began noticing some signs that Devin was
16 possibly depressed. He had quit his job and didn't work for
17 a period of time.

18 He lived off money that he had in his savings account,
19 began selling things he had previously bought so that he
20 could pay bills. I was getting texts at weird hours in the
21 middle of the night, and he had begun to lose weight. His
22 change in behavior was noticeable and very much out of
23 character for him. In the spring of 2021, I got a phone
24 call just a few weeks apart from both Devin's dad and my
25 sister.

1 They began questioning me about whether I was under any
2 impression that Devin was using drugs. Like so many
3 parents, I made excuses for him. No, he's not, he's just
4 depressed. He wouldn't do drugs. There's no way. I was
5 that parent. You know, the one that says, not my child.
6 You see, this is all part of the stigma of both mental
7 health and substance abuse. Our kids are afraid to admit
8 when they have a problem because even as adults, we don't
9 even want to admit that our kids have a problem.

10 There is shame that is associated with mental health
11 and addiction, and unless you have ever felt the shame
12 yourself or watched a loved one experience it, I am not sure
13 that you can truly understand what I am talking about.
14 Devin died in my home and was found February 24th in his
15 room with his door closed by himself.

16 Narcan would not have saved his life. I could not have
17 saved his life. His brothers could not have saved his life.
18 Fentanyl is a silent killer. I didn't even know that my son
19 was dead until I got a phone call at 6.35 a.m. from his boss
20 stating that he had been trying to reach Devin for 30
21 minutes and he had not been answering his phone. And even
22 then, I still had no idea what was going on.

23 I was 30 miles away from home at a wrestling workout
24 with my youngest son, and my middle son had gone down the
25 stairs when he heard Devin's phone ringing multiple times,

1 only to find him unresponsive. My middle son heard Devin's
2 coworker knocking at the door. He went to the door, and he
3 told him that Devin was not waking up and he asked him to
4 come inside for help.

5 His coworker immediately called 9-1-1 and performed CPR
6 on him until EMTs arrived. By the time I got home, my son
7 had been pronounced dead and the sheriff was sitting in my
8 bedroom with my middle child. I was in shock. There were
9 so many EMTs everywhere. I was never prepared for the loss
10 of my child. Every day since February 24th, I have turned
11 my pain into a purpose.

12 I become Devin's voice and his life mattered. I have
13 started a nonprofit organization called Devin's Forever 23
14 Foundation, Inc., and it is my mission to spread awareness
15 and education to communities across Iowa. With the help of
16 parents like Deric and Kathy Kidd, who started
17 becometheirvoice.org, I am now able to go into the HHSTW
18 Community School District following this field hearing today
19 and give a PowerPoint presentation that I am hoping will
20 spread the process along a bit in terms of spreading
21 awareness to junior high and high school youth in our area.

22 If every single one of us worked together to create a
23 difference, we would not only impact one person's life, but
24 we would impact everyone influenced by them throughout their
25 entire lifetime. One by one, we will create a ripple

1 effect.

2 I beg you, do not turn a blind eye and ignore this
3 fentanyl epidemic our country is facing right now. It is
4 going to take a village to make a change. Let's be the
5 change our children and our future generations need. Thank
6 you for this opportunity.

7 [The prepared statement of Ms. Anderson follows:]

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1 Senator Grassley. Thank you, Ms. Anderson. And now we
2 go to Ms. Arwine.

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1 STATEMENT OF LAURIE ARWINE, MOTHER OF BAILEY ARWINE

2 Ms. Arwine. Thank you, Senator Grassley, for providing
3 us with an opportunity to speak today and share the story of
4 our son Bailey who died from fentanyl. My name is Laurie
5 Arwine, and my husband, Hans, and I lost our youngest son,
6 Bailey, to an accidental fentanyl overdose almost seven
7 months ago.

8 I want to take a minute to share with you who Bailey
9 was and who was impacted by his death. Bailey was our
10 youngest son and was only 22 years old when he passed.
11 Bailey was our blessing baby. We thought we were done
12 having children, and God blessed us with another sweet baby
13 boy.

14 He is a brother to Brandon and Brittany and an uncle to
15 Axl, Leif, and Loan. He was a grandson and a nephew to
16 several aunts, uncles, and many cousins. Bailey was a
17 natural athlete who excelled in basketball and track. He
18 started off four years in basketball and scored 1,000 points
19 by his junior year. His long legs made him a natural
20 sprinter in track, which helped the Lisbon Lions win three
21 State championships.

22 Bailey was known for his gentle, carefree spirit, his
23 shy, quirky smile, and his genuine kindness to everyone. He
24 never judged anyone and would be a friend who ever needed
25 one. He made a definite impact on those who crossed his

1 path. There were over 500 people who attended his
2 visitation and celebration of life, which is a testament to
3 how many people's lives he has touched and were impacted by
4 his death.

5 April 5th, 2022 is a day all of our lives changed
6 forever. I remember that afternoon sitting at my desk at
7 school, watching my husband walk through the door. I could
8 see the look of intense pain in his eyes, and when I asked
9 what was wrong, he uttered three small words that still
10 haunt me, Bailey is gone. We learned that Bailey bought
11 Xanax from someone who he used to work with.

12 Bailey had FaceTimed his best friend to show him the
13 pill he bought because he thought it looked different. His
14 friend told him not to take it because it looked like a
15 press pill. Unfortunately, Bailey still took that one pill.
16 The pill Bailey thought was Xanax ended up having a lethal
17 amount of fentanyl.

18 Bailey did not want to die and did not deserve to die
19 from taking one pill he thought was Xanax. Bailey did not
20 struggle from a substance abuse disorder. He was just like
21 so many who would occasionally need Xanax. Last week, the
22 police investigator in charge of his case advised us they
23 are closing the investigation of Bailey's death due to lack
24 of evidence needed to prosecute.

25 Their decision brought more pain and heartache, knowing

1 there will be no justice served for our son's death. The
2 drug dealer who sold Bailey the pill, we know who he is, is
3 free on the streets, living his life, and could still be
4 harming others selling pills. Actions need to happen to
5 stop these drug dealers from selling pills.

6 Actions need to happen to have stronger laws to
7 prosecute those selling pills. Action needs to happen to
8 stop these illegal pills from coming across our borders.
9 Parents need to talk with their children, and schools need
10 to talk to students to create awareness about the dangers of
11 buying pills.

12 Our faith and the promise, knowing we will see Bailey
13 again in heaven, is the only thing that has helped us get
14 through the pain and emptiness in our hearts we go through
15 every day with missing our sweet boy. One scripture we
16 stand on is Romans 8.28, "we know that all things work
17 together for good to those that love God and to those who
18 are called according to His purpose."

19 It is hard to even imagine there could be anything good
20 that could come from Bailey's death, and nothing can ever
21 bring our son back. However, now we believe our purpose is
22 to share Bailey's story and hopefully prevent a family from
23 going through the heartache of losing someone they love so
24 much.

25 No parent should have to lose their son. No sister or

1 brother should have to lose a sibling. No grandparent
2 should have to lose their grandchild. No aunt or uncle
3 should have to lose their nephew or niece. And no friend
4 should have to lose their best friend from fentanyl.
5 Fentanyl changed our lives forever.

6 Fentanyl took away a son, a brother, an uncle, a
7 grandson, a cousin, and a kind and caring friend to so many.
8 Fentanyl stole our son from having a future. We need to
9 make a stand now and do something to create more awareness
10 of the dangers of fentanyl and stop pills that kill so no
11 other family will have to go through the heartache of losing
12 their loved one.

13 If our actions can take a dealer off the street, we can
14 possibly save lives and ensure Bailey's life will not be
15 forgotten. Thank you.

16 [The prepared statement of Ms. Arwine follows:]
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1 Senator Grassley. Thank you, Ms. Arwine. I have got
2 just a few questions based upon your experience and what you
3 have just told us about. I think they are easy questions,
4 but they might be hard for you.

5 And I think Ms. Anderson saying that she started her
6 nonprofit is probably answers to one of the questions I am
7 going to ask. But do you have any advice out there for
8 parents who might be struggling with figuring out how to
9 talk to their kids about Fentanyl? Go in any order you want
10 to go in.

11 Ms. Anderson. Well, first of all, I made the mistake
12 when I found out that Devin was having some substance abuse
13 issues of only focusing on his mental health. And I truly
14 believe that in order for someone to succeed in a substance
15 abuse treatment program, they need to also, at the same
16 time, be getting help with their mental health.

17 So I guess that is my advice to parents is not to treat
18 the two issues separately because they are not. You -- and
19 I guess it is hard for me to explain, like when I am put on
20 the spot like this, but if you treat a mental health
21 disorder, it is not going to make the addiction go away.

22 And if you treat the addiction, it is not going to make
23 your mental health disorder go away. You have to treat them
24 both together.

25 Mr. Kidd. One of the things that we have found in

1 looking at all of this is that most, if not all of these
2 kids, they have gone through something. And it could be
3 something as simple as bullying or peer pressure. There is
4 some commonality there. There are some stresses, there is
5 something there.

6 So I think that my advice to the parents would be that
7 you need to address and pay attention to the underlying
8 issues because they are not just taking or trying or
9 experimenting pills or drugs or anything else just to do it.
10 There is a reason that they are doing it. You know, these
11 kids that go through traumatic divorces, that have problems
12 in school, that have issues with bullying.

13 That have -- you know, and if they are isolated, you
14 know, just like we had through the pandemic, there is
15 something common with a lot of these kids that is causing
16 them to take something. So I would not turn a blind eye to
17 that. I would pay attention. You know, it is readily
18 available. It is out there.

19 And if you aren't talking to your own kids and I guess
20 communicating and making a connection with them, somebody
21 else will.

22 Senator Grassley. Ms. Arwine.

23 Ms. Arwine. Well our son didn't struggle from a
24 substance abuse disorder. He just would dabble in it. He
25 would smoke the occasional marijuana. We know he would get

1 something from his cousin. So this was a shock to us
2 knowing that it was just that one pill that could kill our
3 child. Just love your children. Be there for them, talk to
4 them, support them, love them unconditionally. That is all.

5 Senator Grassley. I think in that one answer to one
6 question you have answered the other questions I had. Maybe
7 a little more specific one, and I will end here with the
8 three of you and then go to the second panel, because as I
9 pointed out to you, such a little amount of fentanyl can
10 kill.

11 It seems pretty important that we have to spread
12 awareness of that one fake pill laced with fentanyl can
13 kill, and nobody would think in terms of just a few
14 milligrams killing. Is there any way that you would suggest
15 spreading that awareness? Mr. Kidd, you want to start out?

16 Mr. Kidd. I think it has to start in -- it obviously
17 starts with the parents, but I think it has to flow over
18 into the schools. Without the schools taking part in this,
19 we are not going to get the message out there to the masses.
20 And I know that we have had struggles, which is part of the
21 reason that we created our website.

22 We wanted to create a tool for ourselves and the
23 parents across this nation to approach the schools. I had
24 several conversations myself with principals, you know, and
25 other people within the schools, and it wasn't received

1 well, trying to get this information out there.

2 And I don't know if it was because of their policies,
3 but if we can't attack this, you know, through the schools
4 and through the parents and make them aware, it is going to
5 be a lot more difficult. We were finding that there are so
6 many people out there that really have no idea. And I think
7 that they will agree that as a parent that has lost a child,
8 there is nothing else that compares to it.

9 And when it involves drugs, there is a stigma there.
10 And we can tell our friends and even our family, for that
11 matter, and we can talk about it, but there is still that
12 stigma there and they still have this mentality, most
13 people, that it won't happen to my child. You know, my
14 child is -- I have a good kid. They don't get involved in
15 that stuff.

16 We are hitting barriers and walls just because of the
17 stigma and the mentality associated with it. And it is
18 going to take a joint effort, as Brooke said, it is going to
19 take a joint effort in order to tackle this to drive that
20 stigma down and to get the word out together.

21 Senator Grassley. Either of you two want to add to
22 that anything? Ms. Anderson.

23 Ms. Anderson. I just agree with everything that he
24 says, and I also want to point out that fentanyl can be in
25 anything. It can be a marijuana, cocaine, meth, Adderall,

1 Xanax, these M30 pills.

2 And so I think it is important for younger used, you
3 know, maybe starting at junior high age, to realize that
4 when they start to think about, you know, if they are peer
5 pressured into trying something, there is a chance that
6 fentanyl could be on it.

7 Senator Grassley. Ms. Arwine.

8 Ms. Arwine. I agree with Mr. Kidd and Ms. Anderson
9 that we need to talk to our kids, we need to talk to the
10 schools, we need to create awareness that it will, in our
11 case just take that one pill, to kill a child. And you
12 don't know what that pain feels like until you lose someone
13 you love.

14 And I agree with Mr. Kidd about the stigma. Nobody
15 wants to talk about it, but it is out there, everywhere.
16 And like you shared, it is in marijuana, and we just need to
17 really talk to our students and our children and just say,
18 don't buy anything off the streets.

19 Senator Grassley. I don't have any more questions.
20 You folks are welcomed to stay if you want to listen to the
21 end. But also you are welcome to go if you want to. So
22 just whatever is your pleasure. It is my privilege now to
23 introduce our second panel, law enforcement agencies leading
24 the fight against fentanyl. We have Steven Cagen.

25 Mr. Cagen is Assistant Director of Counter and

1 Transnational Organized Crime at Homeland Security

2 Investigations. As Assistant Director, Mr. Cagen oversees
3 investigations that disrupt and dismantle the transnational
4 criminal organization pushing drugs like fentanyl, and
5 hopefully keeping them out of the United States.

6 These investigations target money laundering, bulk cash
7 smuggling, drug trafficking, violent gang activity, and
8 human smuggling. Before becoming Assistant Director, Mr.
9 Cagen was Special Agent in charge for Denver, Colorado. In
10 that role, he was responsible for the criminal investigation
11 conducted by 18 Homeland Security officers.

12 Mr. Cagen is a career public servant who started with
13 Homeland Security in 1998, as a clerk with the Immigration
14 and Naturalization Service. Stephan Baynes is Commissioner
15 of Iowa Department of Public Safety. He previously served
16 as an Assistant U.S. Attorney here in Des Moines, where he
17 coordinated the Department of Justice Project Safe
18 Neighborhood Initiative.

19 Mr. Baynes spent 15 years as an Assistant Polk County
20 Attorney, where he specialized in drug and gang prosecution.
21 He has also worked as an Assistant Attorney General assigned
22 to the special litigation division of the Iowa Attorney
23 General's Office.

24 We invited a DEA agent, Anne Milgram, to this drug
25 caucus hearing, but the Department of Justice leadership

1 declined to send an agency witness. Administrator Mel
2 Graham has offered to come to Iowa at a later date. I hope
3 she does.

4 Families like the three that we heard from today are
5 owed an explanation from the agency of what the Drug
6 Enforcement Agency is doing to stop the flow of fentanyl.
7 Congress is owed an explanation from the agency of what DEA
8 needs to win the war against fentanyl so we can actually win
9 that.

10 This is not a partisan issue. It certainly is not a
11 political issue to the families here today. I am
12 disappointed the leadership decided not to send an agency
13 witness today. Before we hear from Mr. Cagen and Mr.
14 Baynes, I want to once again thank you folks for coming and
15 telling a very tough story, but a very needed story.

16 Now, Mr. Cagen, will you start out, and Mr. Baynes.

1 STATEMENT OF STEVEN CAGEN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF
2 COUNTER AND TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME, HOMELAND SECURITY
3 INVESTIGATIONS

4 Mr. Cagen. I first want to start with as a father of
5 two kids just down the I-80 corridor in Colorado, you all
6 are very, very strong. That is very impressive. And we
7 have been fighting this fight for a long time but have
8 nothing that you all have going on in your heart. So I just
9 want to recognize how strong that is.

10 Senator Grassley, thank you for the opportunity to
11 appear before you today to discuss Homeland Security
12 investigations' efforts to disrupt the flow of fentanyl
13 entering the United States through Mexico, and to combat
14 transnational criminal organizations responsible for fueling
15 the deadly overdose epidemic.

16 This field hearing could not come at a better time
17 given the threat posed by fentanyl. As we just heard and
18 similar stories such as these reverberate through the
19 nation. Fentanyl, methamphetamine and other dangerous drugs
20 continue to inflict massive harm on American families. As
21 the principal investigative component of the Department of
22 Homeland Security, the HSI is responsible for investigating
23 and dismantling the transnational criminal organizations
24 that are flooding the United States with drugs fueling this
25 epidemic.

1 To do this, HSI conducts criminal investigations at
2 every location in the illicit supply chain, internationally
3 where TCOs operate and manufacture illegal drugs, at our
4 nation's physical borders where smugglers attempt to exploit
5 America's legitimate trade, travel, and transportation
6 systems, and in our communities where criminal organizations
7 earn substantial profits from selling synthetic drugs, and
8 on the darknet, where increasingly tech savvy TCOs have
9 replaced hand to hand drug sales with anonymous
10 cryptocurrency purchases.

11 In addition to combating narcotics, HSI attacks the
12 criminal networks that source the smuggle of U.S. origin
13 firearms and ammunition to Mexico, fueling violence and
14 enabling cartels to flourish.

15 Today, Mexican cartels serve as a principal source of
16 illicit opioids, which are synthesized using precursor
17 chemicals sourced from China and other foreign nations.
18 Disrupting and dismantling the fentanyl and methamphetamine
19 precursor chemicals supply chain is an integral element to
20 HSI's approach to stopping the flow of illicit drugs.

21 These precursors serve as fuel the cartels need to
22 manufacture their deadly drugs destined for American cities
23 and streets. The vast majority of fentanyl flooding
24 American streets is smuggled across our border with Mexico.

25 HSI is the Federal primary law enforcement agency

1 responsible for investigating drug seizures and other
2 criminal activity occurring at our nation's borders. HSI
3 has established the Border Enforcement Security Task Forces,
4 or BEST task forces, along the Southwest border and key
5 nodes throughout the country to strategically target TCOs.

6 For instance, HSI office in Omaha staffs the BEST team
7 that works along the I-80 corridor in Iowa and Nebraska.

8 The Omaha BEST team works to combat illicit transportation
9 of narcotics destined for communities throughout Iowa.

10 HSI's BEST is comprised of over 200 Federal, State, local,
11 tribal, and international agencies, representing one of the
12 agency's premier tools for turning simple border seizures
13 into TCO toppling investigations.

14 HSI field offices in Des Moines, Cedar City, Sioux City
15 take pride in the network of law enforcement partnerships,
16 which include over a dozen State and local enforcement
17 agencies within Iowa, as well as host Federal agencies.

18 These robust partnerships enable HSI to combat TCOs
19 engaged in illicit trafficking as well as other cross-border
20 crimes which greatly increase the safety of people in Iowa.
21 I wanted to share one recent example conducted by our office
22 in Des Moines that resulted in the seizure of heroin and
23 arrest of a convicted narcotics smuggler.

24 February 3rd, 2021, CBP officers seized a parcel from
25 Mexico at the FedEx International Mail Facility in Memphis

1 after discovering more than 1 kilo of heroin with a street
2 value of over \$100,000 concealed within a pair of sandals.
3 The package was destined for an address in Alexander, Iowa.

4 On the screen in front of you are images of the seized
5 parcel containing heroin laden sandals. HSI Special Agent
6 subsequently conducted controlled delivery of the package at
7 the residence in Alexander, Iowa which resulted in one
8 arrest. The recipient of this parcel, a convicted felon,
9 was armed with a handgun at the time of arrest.

10 And on July 20, or July 1st, 2022, was convicted in the
11 Northern District of Iowa and sentenced to 180 months in
12 Federal prison. On the screen in front of you, you will see
13 images of the handgun and the drug paraphernalia. The
14 illicit drug supply chain fueling overdose deaths throughout
15 the country begins abroad but ends on Main Street.

16 Working alongside our domestic and foreign partners,
17 HSI remains dedicated to stopping illicit drugs at every
18 location within the supply chain. Sir, thank you for the
19 opportunity to appear before you, and for your continued
20 support of HSI and the critical role it plays in attacking
21 criminal organizations responsible for fueling overdose
22 epidemic.

23 I look forward to the questions today. Thank you.

24 [The prepared statement of Mr. Cagen follows:]
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1 Senator Grassley. Thank you, Mr. Cagen. Now, Mr.
2 Baynes.

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1 STATEMENT OF STEPHAN BAYNES, COMMISSIONER, IOWA

2 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

3 Mr. Baynes. Thank you, Senator Grassley. Stopping the
4 flow of poisons like fentanyl and methamphetamine into our
5 communities remains one of our highest law enforcement
6 priorities. And for a moment, I am going to step aside for
7 my prepared remarks, because after hearing from the Kidd,
8 the Anderson, and the Arwine family, I feel compelled to do
9 so.

10 There is a common misconception that I believe that
11 pervades this country at times, reference that drug
12 trafficking is a nonviolent offense. Hearing the pain from
13 the Kidd, and the Anderson, and the Arwine family, I would
14 challenge that notion to my core.

15 Bailey, Sebastian, and Devin didn't overdose. They
16 died a violent death. To use a term like accidental
17 overdose, I, with all due respect, is too polite in my
18 estimation. I am convinced they were killed. In my humble
19 opinion, they were murdered. They were poisoned. And had
20 this not been fentanyl, but rat poison or arsenic or ricin,
21 we would be treating it as we should, as a homicide.

22 But from the bottom of my heart, my condolences.
23 Hearing you talk, hearing the Kidds talk about Sebastian, I
24 have a senior in high school right now that had his knee
25 rolled up in his last football game. And after hearing the

1 Kidds talk a couple of months ago, I had to sit my son down
2 and say, I know you are struggling with a knee injury.

3 I know you want to play in your last playoff game in
4 football. I know there may be someone at school that says,
5 hey, take this oxycontin, take a Percocet. You can get
6 through the game. You can continue to help your team. And
7 I had to tell him, it is not worth it because you can fall
8 victim just like Sebastian did. You think you are treating
9 your knee injury, you think you are being a good teammate,
10 you are trying to struggle along to maintain your dream of
11 playing football and it could kill you.

12 So like I said, I digress for a moment, but I would
13 challenge anyone here that says drug trafficking is a
14 nonviolent offense. And as a drug prosecutor for over 15
15 years and now as the Commissioner of the Iowa Department of
16 Public Safety, I have heard time and again from suffering
17 individuals that they would not wish their addiction on
18 their worst enemy.

19 I have had folks tell me that recovering from a gunshot
20 wound is far easier than recovering from an opioid
21 addiction. The influx of fentanyl coming into Iowa is
22 touching every corner of our State. Both urban and rural
23 communities are reeling, especially as these highly
24 addictive and deadly opioids are being mass marketed and
25 falsely branded as prescription pain medications like

1 Percocet or oxycontin.

2 Even though Iowa maintains one of the nation's lowest
3 drug overdose death rates, ranking 46th among all States, we
4 are still experiencing the same trend that is playing out
5 across the country. The Iowa Department of Health and Human
6 Services reports a 34 percent increase in drug overdose
7 deaths since 2019, rising from 350 total deaths to 470. By
8 contrast, Iowa on average has about 35 to 45 homicides a
9 year.

10 And think for a moment the amount of time and effort we
11 pour into solving those crimes. And here we are talking
12 about 470 lives, 10 times that amount. This includes a 64
13 percent increase in overdose deaths caused by opioids, and a
14 chilling 120 percent increase in drug overdose deaths
15 involving young Iowans under the age of 25.

16 Last year, illicit fentanyl was implicated in 83
17 percent of all Iowa opioid related overdose deaths, compared
18 to just 31 percent five years prior. The volume of fentanyl
19 being seized by law enforcement throughout Iowa is shocking,
20 even to the most veteran narcotics agents and drug chemists.

21 To be frank, I am surprised our overdose deaths aren't
22 higher. Put that concern into context. In all of 2021, the
23 Division of Criminal Investigations Criminalistics
24 Laboratory analyzed 17,163 fentanyl pills described as --
25 disguised excuse me, as prescription drugs. In the first

1 nine months of 2022, that number has grown fivefold to
2 92,635. It bears repeating, 92,635 fentanyl pills disguised
3 as prescription drugs have been seized in Iowa in the first
4 nine months of 2022.

5 Seizures of powder based fentanyl is also skyrocketing
6 as we have seized 22,735 grams of powdered fentanyl, three
7 times as much as all of last year. The seizures keep piling
8 up and there is little signs of it stopping. As you can
9 see, the fentanyl problem is real. It is in our
10 neighborhoods.

11 It is affordable, it is plentiful, and there are
12 irreversible consequences for unsuspecting Iowans. Drug
13 traffickers, primarily from Mexico, are using makeshift pill
14 mills to turn fentanyl powder into pills that have the color
15 and markings of prescription drugs. As you can see from the
16 photos here today, the pill presses used by the cartels can
17 create nearly flawless reproductions of common prescription
18 drugs.

19 As of late, the cartels have now taken to targeting
20 children with brightly colored variations that appear like
21 candy. Just a few weeks ago, Des Moines Metro officers
22 seized 150 multicolored pills that were found to contain
23 methamphetamine. The photo is here to my right. If our
24 seasoned narcotics agents and our drug chemists can't
25 immediately tell the difference, our children should not be

1 expected to.

2 According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, 2
3 milligrams of fentanyl can be lethal, depending on body size
4 and tolerance. For comparison purposes, the tiny granules
5 of C on the letter of the number two pencil in the photo in
6 front of me represents a lethal dose and can stop a beating
7 heart.

8 The Drug Enforcement Administration has found that 4
9 out of every 10 counterfeit pills submitted to their lab
10 contains a lethal dose. If we apply that data point to
11 Iowa, that means that more than 37,000 lethal fentanyl pills
12 have been seized in Iowa this year alone. We are truly at
13 the point that anyone choosing to take one of these pills is
14 playing a deadly game of Russian roulette.

15 Here in Iowa, law enforcement is intensifying its
16 efforts to dismantle fentanyl trafficking networks, using
17 data driven strategies to identify and address problem areas
18 across the State. We are using intelligence information,
19 reports from law enforcement, and public health information
20 to drive our efforts.

21 In late 2022, for example, our narcotics investigators
22 began working with multiple agencies, including the tri-
23 county drug task force, to investigate a drug trafficking
24 organization operating in the Northern District of Iowa with
25 ties to Mexico. After a month's long investigation, law

1 enforcement obtained a search warrant for a home located in
2 Waterloo, Iowa.

3 While searching that residence, officers found over 90
4 pounds of methamphetamine, 23 pounds of powdered fentanyl,
5 approximately 40,000 tablets containing a mixture of
6 fentanyl and tramadol, and 6,000 pure fentanyl tablets
7 behind a false wall in the home's basement. Today, 14
8 individuals have been indicted for Federal drug related
9 crimes and 10 individuals have been charged with State level
10 money laundering and drug related offenses.

11 Another example of our strategy to dismantle fentanyl
12 trafficking networks can be seen in a recent Federal
13 indictment of six Cass County residents for conspiracy to
14 distribute fentanyl after a series of overdoses rocked rural
15 Cass and Shelby counties. In a span of just a few months,
16 those two small counties had five fentanyl overdoses, two of
17 which were fatal.

18 Agents further learned that the distribution of
19 naloxone in those two counties had skyrocketed. Once the
20 size and scope of the problem had been identified, Federal
21 and local law enforcement from both Iowa and Nebraska
22 initiated a proactive and targeted investigation designed to
23 root out the source of these overdoses. It took six months
24 of diligence and hard work, but the efforts of law
25 enforcement paid off in June of this year, when a grand jury

1 handed down six Federal indictments.

2 In conclusion, it is my sincere hope that after hearing
3 from everyone today that Iowans and our elected officials
4 will have a greater understanding and appreciation for the
5 pervasiveness and dangers of law enforcement -- excuse me,
6 of fentanyl and how law enforcement is doing everything we
7 can to stop it. Thank you, sir.

8 [The prepared statement of Mr. Baynes follows:]

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1 Senator Grassley. Thank you, Mr. Baynes. I will start
2 my questioning with Mr. Cagen. Law enforcement is working
3 real hard to try to stop the flow of fentanyl into our
4 country at the border. Seizures at the border have steadily
5 increased.

6 Customs and Border Protection published statistics on
7 fentanyl seizures, 4,700 pounds of fentanyl seized 2020,
8 11,000 pounds seized 2021, and 14,700 pounds of fentanyl
9 seized in 2022. That is more than a threefold increase in
10 fentanyl seizures by DHS in those three years. Some have
11 pointed to this statistic as evidence that current border
12 policy is working and that the support supplied by DHS is
13 sufficient to stop the flow into our country.

14 I disagree with that argument, in part because the
15 seizures of fentanyl have increased as the number of
16 fentanyl related deaths in our country have also very much
17 increased. So do you believe that these numbers indicate
18 the increased effectiveness of fentanyl enforcement or speak
19 to a border shift in the amount of fentanyl being smuggled
20 into the United States by the cartels and a change in their
21 tactics of smuggle -- to smuggle fentanyl?

22 Mr. Cagen. Thank you for the question. It is a great
23 question being asked all over and I think it is a great time
24 to be able to answer it. First, I would like to speak a
25 little bit to fentanyl itself, and so there is a great

1 understanding of how it is made and where it comes from.

2 And the fact that with fentanyl, methamphetamine, there
3 is no environmental issues involved. There is no climate
4 issues. With cocaine back in the day, with marijuana back,
5 you know, well today, there has to be the right
6 environmental situation in order to make those, and which
7 means there is a longer lifecycle of that drug.

8 When you look at fentanyl and methamphetamine, there is
9 a very short lifecycle, because as long as the Mexican
10 cartels can get their hands on the precursor chemicals and
11 get them into a lab in Mexico, they can churn out these
12 pills all day long.

13 And we believe that is why we are seeing the larger
14 seizures at the ports of entry coming through in large
15 cargo, cargo containers coming through, in hidden
16 compartments, people carrying them through. That is the
17 reason for the larger seizures. So just to set the
18 expectation so our brain understands kind of how those drugs
19 are made.

20 Now, to answer your question on, you know, larger
21 seizures, does that mean that we are stopping more? I
22 believe that that means that there is more coming across.
23 There is more coming across those ports of entry. We are
24 seeing larger seizures. We can do more.

25 The Federal Government, I am not here to speak on

1 behalf of CBP, but I usually testify right next to them all
2 the time, we can do more. We just need more resources on
3 the borders and the ports of entry.

4 But to flat out answer your question, no, I don't think
5 it is -- I think it is greater effectiveness, but I also
6 don't think that we are stopping all the drugs that are
7 coming in, and that is very evident today.

8 Senator Grassley. Also for you, just a few years ago
9 fentanyl was being shipped directly into the United States
10 from China. But in 2021, the U.S. Postal Inspector reported
11 an 81 percent decrease in international fentanyl seizures, a
12 174 increase in domestic fentanyl seizures, and that there
13 have been no fentanyl seizures directly from China since
14 2019.

15 Does this data match DHS's findings in how is fentanyl
16 -- in how fentanyl is reaching the United States?

17 Mr. Cagen. Yes, it does as it pertains to the U.S.
18 Postal Service. What we saw is in 2018 and 2019 there was
19 two major pieces, a push thanks to everyone, but a push
20 through Congress to change a few things, and also China
21 scheduled fentanyl as illegal.

22 And what that meant is that in China, they stopped
23 manufacturing fentanyl. That is when we were getting the
24 pure fentanyl coming in through international mail
25 facilities and then hitting the U.S. Postal Service and

1 hitting the streets of America.

2 That paradigm shift after 2019 switched to the Mexican
3 cartels working with transnational criminal organizations in
4 China to procure precursors. So the precursors chemicals,
5 also we call them precursors and pre-precursors because it
6 gets very diluted, so they are they are getting precursors
7 out of China, coming over the water and landing in Mexico,
8 and being handed off to the Mexican cartels.

9 At that point, the cartel moves the precursors into
10 their super labs, and that is where all these pills are
11 pressed. That is the M30s. That is what is ending up in
12 the streets of America. So that is the paradigm shift in
13 why we don't see these pills as much coming through the U.S.
14 Postal Service, because the majority of the drugs have
15 shifted. They are coming up through Mexico.

16 They are hitting our nation's borders and ending up on
17 the streets of America. That is -- for my organization, for
18 HSI, that is what we specialize in, which is that supply
19 chain. In essence, if you think about it, that is an
20 organizational supply chain.

21 And with our unique customs authorities, we have the
22 ability to push out our borders, and not only attack the
23 pills as they are hitting our border, but try to push it
24 out, and work with our foreign counterparts and our foreign
25 partners in Mexico and our transnational investigative units

1 in order to stop those precursors before they even get to
2 the labs in Mexico.

3 So our goal is to not wait until it gets to our
4 borders, not wait until it gets to our city streets. Our
5 goal is to hit that either -- sorry, to seize that, stop
6 that, seize that, and destroy it either on the ocean before
7 it gets to Mexico, or once it gets to Mexico, working with
8 our foreign counterparts.

9 Senator Grassley. Fan out what you said, or you
10 inferred in your first question more resources were needed.
11 Is that just personnel or is it beyond personnel, the
12 resources that you need?

13 Mr. Cagen. It is beyond personnel. I just mentioned
14 our transnational criminal investigative units, also known
15 in our sphere as vetted units in Mexico. So HSI has 40
16 Mexican Federal police officers, prosecutors, and customs
17 officials in Mexico who work on, as I say just to be totally
18 honest, work on behalf of the American people. They are a
19 very specialized unit sitting in Mexico.

20 And the unique authority that they have is the customs
21 authority. So when that container hits the port of
22 Manzanillo, Mexico, it can never go any further, and it is
23 seized by our foreign counterparts. The one sticking point
24 that HSI needs, needs a Congressional fix is we don't have
25 the ability to pay stipends for these people.

1 We all know they don't make nearly as much as the law
2 enforcement in the U.S., but they are putting themselves in
3 harm's way on our behalf. So one of the things that we are
4 looking for in order to, again, stop those drugs before they
5 even get to the border, is to give us the authority in order
6 to pay Mexican, our Mexican counterparts stipends, those
7 folks that are helping us work this problem.

8 That is the number one because I look at it as a how do
9 we stop this further out before it even gets to our borders?
10 The second piece would be the fact that HSI has 37 -- over
11 3,700 Federal assets ready to throw at this problem, but,
12 sir, you and I, I believe, are going to discuss that at a
13 later date. But that is the -- the stipends for TCAU
14 members is definitely a big point for us.

15 Senator Grassley. Let me go to Mr. Baynes for a couple
16 questions. It has been said that in every State -- well, it
17 is quite common because we know that the stuff at the border
18 spreads eventually to all 50 States.

19 So States like Iowa that are not on the border still
20 are affected by the cartels' influence. Can you identify
21 what cartels are operating in Iowa, explain how they run
22 their operations, and provide examples of what they are
23 doing in this state?

24 Mr. Baynes. Absolutely. Thank you for the question,
25 sir. You know, the main cartels in Mexico are here in Iowa.

1 There is no difference. They are here. What we are really
2 seeing happening is historically what we used to see, and
3 this is my time as a drug prosecutor, is that there wasn't
4 always a pipeline to Iowa, but the stops on the pipeline
5 were far more frequent.

6 So what we used to see maybe 15 or 20 years ago was if
7 100 pounds of methamphetamine came across the border, it
8 would stop in Laredo, and that 100 pounds would get divvied
9 up into 20 pound increments and sent five different places.
10 One of those places, maybe Oklahoma City.

11 And so then that 20 pounds of methamphetamine would end
12 up in Oklahoma City, and then that 20 pounds would get
13 divided up into 5 pound increments. And then from Oklahoma
14 City, it would go to Kansas City and get divvied up again
15 into 1 pound increments, and then a 1 pound increment would
16 make it to Iowa.

17 So we saw multiple stops on that pipeline. And what we
18 are seeing now is the pipeline between Mexico and Iowa is
19 becoming far more direct and there are far fewer stops on
20 that pipeline, and that is why we are seeing such large
21 seizures here in Iowa.

22 The example I can give you of that is in 2019, we were
23 able to identify 16 cases that our division of Narcotics
24 Enforcement agents worked that had a direct evidentiary tie
25 to Mexico. In 2020, we opened up 13 cases with a direct

1 evidentiary tie to Mexico.

2 In 2021, that jumped to 39 cases. It tripled in the
3 span of a year, where we are now opening 39 cases a year
4 with direct evidentiary ties to Mexico, and as we sit here
5 today, we are pushing about 30 cases for this calendar year
6 as well and we expect that we will eclipse 39 the year
7 prior.

8 And so it is an accurate statement to say that most of
9 our communities cannot take the position that we are not a
10 border community because the pipeline is direct. The cases
11 and the data support that notion, especially in the way of
12 case openings here in Iowa.

13 Senator Grassley. Mr. Baynes, also for you, the
14 Federal Bureau of Investigations Crime Data Explorer shows a
15 steady increase in violent crimes that are also involved
16 drug offenses in our country. For example, in 2018, the FBI
17 reported a 6,182 violent crimes that were linked to drug
18 violations.

19 In 2021, FBI reported 10,674 compared to that 6,182
20 violent crimes that were also linked to drug addiction.
21 Iowa also saw 470 drug overdose deaths last year, up from
22 419 in 2020 and 350 in 2019.

23 So question, what is Iowa's department that you had
24 seeing in the field with respect to the rise of violent
25 crime within the last two years, and how is the crime wave

1 related to drug offenses in Iowa, if at all?

2 Mr. Baynes. The tie between violent crime and drug
3 trafficking is significant. A great number of our robberies
4 that we investigate, a great number of the homicides that we
5 are seeing have palpable drug connections throughout Iowa.
6 We are seeing instances where what we would commonly called
7 drug trips where, you know, an individual sets up and says,
8 hey, I want to buy 10 fentanyl tablets.

9 And when those individuals show up, you know, there is
10 strong armed robbery that occurs. To put a little bit of a
11 data point on that, I had inquired the Des Moines Police
12 Department to look at the last two years of homicides here
13 in Des Moines, and there was a total of 28 homicides here in
14 Des Moines over the last two years.

15 When we look at kind of the genesis or maybe some of
16 the background story to those homicides and maybe what drove
17 those homicides, 42 percent of those homicides had a direct
18 correlation to drug trafficking.

19 So 42 percent of the homicides that occurred in Des
20 Moines in the last two years had an identifiable evidentiary
21 tie to drug trafficking and was believed to be the motive in
22 some regard.

23 Senator Grassley. Are the Federal resources that are
24 available to help you in this fentanyl problem adequate or
25 do you see great need for more?

1 Mr. Baynes. Iowa is unique. The Federal resources
2 that we see coming to Iowa are mostly administered by the
3 Department of Public Safety for the most part. We have
4 great relationships, obviously, with our HSI partners, with
5 DEA and ATF. But the reality situation is, their personnel
6 footprint in Iowa is fairly small.

7 Based on population, it is understandable. And what
8 that really creates, though, is a synergy where we must
9 operate with task forces.

10 And that is how we utilize our folks, is our division
11 of narcotics enforcement agents are embedded in local task
12 forces many times alongside of our Federal brothers and
13 sisters in law enforcement, but also our county deputies,
14 our municipal police officers, and really we have to attack
15 the problem kind of collectively in that fashion otherwise
16 we don't have the resources, we don't have the personnel to
17 pull it off. You know, one of the biggest challenges, quite
18 frankly, that we are facing is finding folks that want to do
19 this job anymore.

20 I have 51 vacancies in the Iowa State Patrol as of
21 today's date. I have the resources to hire people. I don't
22 have folks that want to do this job anymore. You know, it
23 is a struggle. We have talked about whether, you know, we
24 need to increase recruiting, do we need to increase pay or
25 benefits, those sorts of things.

1 Quite frankly, my biggest worry is I am not sure it is
2 either of those in total. My biggest worry is have we
3 culturally demonized, put an unfair microscope on law
4 enforcement to the point where our service minded men and
5 women don't want to do the job?

6 Senator Grassley. You don't know how much I hear that
7 from police departments, from Mayors, and I bet every
8 Senator hears that as well. Demoralization of law
9 enforcement and how that affects recruitment and everything.

10 So it is something that we have to deal with, and I
11 don't -- there is a couple bills that we have in the
12 Congress to deal with it, but I think they are like a spit
13 in the ocean compared to what the problem is, but we are
14 going to try everything. I will have one more question to
15 you, then I want to go back to Mr. Cagen.

16 In the first six months of this year, the number of
17 counterfeit prescription pills laced with fentanyl found by
18 the Iowa -- by your department has quadrupled. Which drugs
19 are most commonly being laced with fentanyl?

20 Mr. Baynes. What we are seeing most commonly still is
21 the counterfeit pills, those that you see in front of me.
22 So that is probably the most predominant is counterfeit
23 pills that are made to appear like Percocet or oxycontin or
24 one of your other kind of over -- your common prescription
25 opioids.

1 That is far and away the most common. However, we are
2 starting to see mixed in with a variety of substance, I
3 think one of the family members even mentioned that that,
4 you know, we are starting to see synthetic fentanyl
5 occasionally mixed with marijuana, mixed with cocaine, mixed
6 with some of the other, I guess what would be politely
7 called recreational drugs maybe.

8 And that is incredibly concerning. We have not seen
9 that here in Iowa to the level that they have seen
10 elsewhere. The troubling piece of it is usually Iowa still
11 tends to be about six months behind. And so we fully expect
12 that it will make its way into the heartland here in the
13 next six months, just like we did with kind of the rainbow
14 pills that we saw here in the last two weeks.

15 We had not seen those in Iowa before two weeks ago, and
16 as of two weeks, you can see the pictures. I mean, they
17 look like candy. And that is not candy, that is
18 methamphetamine.

19 Senator Grassley. Back to Mr. Cagen. We just heard
20 from these three families and how they suffer from the loss
21 of a loved one. A lot of these children are purchasing
22 knockoff prescription pills on social media platforms that
23 are actually laced with fentanyl. So what is DHS doing to
24 combat fake pills, is one thing.

25 And then let me follow it up with my other question.

1 How are you seeing trafficking organizations using social
2 media platforms to conduct illegal activity and what can
3 social media companies do to help DHS investigate criminal
4 activity?

5 Mr. Cagen. Senator, you have great questions. These
6 are the questions that bother, I think, us all, right. Did
7 I hear, I mean I heard Snapchat, I heard Facebook. I hear
8 some of the -- this was hard for me to prepare for last
9 night because some of the last things you all heard about
10 your children is linked to a social media platform. That is
11 very disturbing to me. That is extremely disturbing to me.

12 We all deserve, and we all want our privacy. We all
13 want our privacy on our messages that we send back and
14 forth. We all want our privacy -- well some don't want
15 their privacy on social media. But some -- most people do.

16 When we look at social media companies, and I am not
17 going to point out to one individual company, but social
18 media companies as a whole with direct messaging
19 capabilities, end to end encryption, all these things that
20 we want to keep ourselves safe, but we are not holding them
21 accountable to law enforcement.

22 Just as an education piece, there is multiple social
23 media companies out there that I can be in the middle of a
24 very direct investigation into a transnational criminal
25 organization and I need information on a very certain

1 person, as somebody said, we know who gave the pill, we know
2 who that was.

3 And oftentimes I reach out to that company with my own
4 subpoenas or summonses from the Department of Homeland
5 Security, and yes, they comply, yes, you know, they give it
6 to us, but then they turn around and tell the bad guy I am
7 looking at them. There is a problem with that. There is a
8 non-disclosure act that we don't need -- we need these
9 companies to work with us.

10 So I understand that there is a balance between making
11 sure our stuff is private that we talk about every day as
12 human beings, but they also need to be held accountable.
13 And that accountability is in CALEA.

14 I think CALEA needs to be updated to factor in end to
15 end encryption with these companies, and the fact that a
16 company can't just start up one day and offer this
17 absolutely secure platform, but then they don't allow --
18 they don't end up working with law enforcement. So HSI on
19 our front, we work well with a lot of these companies.

20 We have a very robust footprint in our Cyber Crime
21 center, which coordinates, you know, this activity with our
22 State and local partners, with our foreign partners. Our
23 Cyber Crime Center is amazing at working this darknet.

24 But we are only moving further into this world because
25 now everything we do in law enforcement has a social media

1 link. Cartel, we work transnational criminal organization
2 on a grand scale, right. A lot less of the day to day. You
3 know, we do have officers that work together, but we are
4 looking at the grand scale.

5 That day to day is also very different than the grand
6 scale with the cartels. They don't use their social media
7 platforms as much, but they definitely use the end to
8 encryption in their communications in running their
9 organization.

10 So I believe, as an American citizen, I believe that we
11 need to do better in holding these social media companies
12 accountable for their platforms.

13 Senator Grassley. I think that you asked this question
14 -- answered this question as part of an answer to a previous
15 question when you talked about stipends for people to
16 observe what cartels are doing. But because we know this
17 comes from China to Mexico, what efforts has DHS made to
18 intercept these chemicals from coming from China?

19 And what tools do they need to cut off the flow of
20 these chemicals from China into Mexico? And I assume those
21 payments you wanted to make was part of that tool. Do you
22 have anything else to add to that question?

23 Mr. Cagen. The -- no, not to add to that, other than
24 if we are going to discuss the border. But if you want to
25 -- I mean, what -- if the question is, what are we doing to

1 target those precursors, we are uniquely situated because of
2 our customs authorities that we share trade data with
3 countries all around the world. Mexico, our neighboring
4 partners, Canada, we share trade data.

5 What we do at HSI is we exploit that trade data, and we
6 watch containers, we watch shipments move all around the
7 world. So our operation, Hydra, has the ability to watch
8 precursor chemicals leaving China and coming to the shores
9 of Mexico. And as I stated before our, TCIUs, we work with
10 our TCIUs that if we have the probable cause to give to our
11 foreign counterparts, we can stop those precursors before
12 they even get to the Mexican labs.

13 The numbers are amazing. I don't have them with me,
14 but, you know, the amount of precursor stopped. The
15 difficult part in precursors is they are dual use chemicals.
16 So we as the Federal Government have to be able to show that
17 this amount of something that is common, I use tartaric
18 acid, which is a precursor, actually a precursor to making
19 fentanyl, but that is also something that is derived in
20 fruit.

21 So how do you stop, as a Government, how do you stop a
22 precursor chemical from moving when it could have legitimate
23 means? For us, that is the sharing of intelligence. That
24 is the sharing of intelligence that comes from the streets
25 in Iowa all the way to the Federal Government and all the

1 way to the sharing of information and intelligence with our
2 Mexican counterparts in order to stop containers like that.

3 So I can give the HSI response which is, we focus on
4 trade data, and we exploit that trade data in order to push
5 out our borders and ensure -- not ensure, I apologize, to do
6 everything that we can to stop those pills from even being
7 made in the first place.

8 Senator Grassley. Also do you -- and a little bit
9 unrelated to just fentanyl but I think a very important
10 point to bring up because we are focusing on fentanyl
11 distribution, but cartels and organizations that they work
12 with are also committing other crimes. What other types of
13 criminal activity are you seeing these groups engage in and
14 how are they using the investigations, your investigations
15 of that related criminal activity to dismantle the criminal
16 organizations?

17 Mr. Cagen. Great. And thank you for that question as
18 well. I will take it back to looking at it as a supply
19 chain. These are just major organizations, anything like a
20 major company. They will move anything through their supply
21 chain. Today we are talking about fentanyl,
22 methamphetamine, drugs, narcotics.

23 Tomorrow I can sit and have the same conversation about
24 guns going South about money going South. I can talk about
25 terrorists being moved through these routes that they own.

1 So these are transnational criminal organizations that are
2 poly criminal. They focus on drugs. It earns them a lot of
3 money. But so does the movement of people. So does the
4 movement of terrorists.

5 So does the movement of guns, of money, of, I always
6 find this one interesting, cell phones. Cell phones are
7 very big money that these organizations move, and actually
8 by trade based money laundering actually move value back to
9 China because those are so expensive. So the HSI approach
10 is to target the key criminal -- the key nodes within the
11 supply chain.

12 And doing that oftentimes, when we talk about money
13 laundering, we -- HSI focuses on the money. There is a lot
14 of times that we are watching the money first and we are
15 following money flows around the world, and I don't even
16 know what criminal activity they are a part of, and then
17 later we identify maybe it is drugs, maybe it is people,
18 maybe it is guns.

19 So these organizations will move absolutely anything
20 through their routes and their pathways, and they have the
21 ability to do it. And that is where we work with all our
22 foreign counterparts around the world to try to stop it.

23 Senator Grassley. Back to Mr. Baynes. I think in
24 Iowa, 83 percent of all opioids related deaths were
25 attributable to synthetic opioids. That obviously includes

1 fentanyl. Congress continues to extend the temporary
2 controlled authority for all fentanyl analogs, but this is
3 going to expire December.

4 Obviously, this is a major goal of mine to get that
5 permanent scheduling of these substances. I would like to
6 hear from you how fentanyl substances impact Iowa. And if
7 you would like, please comment on why permanently scheduling
8 these drugs is very important.

9 Mr. Baynes. Well, it is absolutely imperative. You
10 know, I believe Mr. Cagen talked about it at times, and I
11 think you did as well, Senator. Sometimes we are chasing
12 the chemistry, and that can be one of the biggest
13 challenges. I know as a former prosecutor, that was one of
14 my biggest frustrations, was that, you know, you can
15 literally change, you know, a very small pharmacological
16 component or a chemical component and you have created a new
17 analog that falls just slightly outside existing law.

18 And that is something that we see frequently and is an
19 often source of frustration, because by the time we then
20 have allowed the law to catch up, there is damage in its
21 wake. And so being as nimble and as proactive as we can,
22 and being responsive to these emerging analogs, is
23 absolutely imperative because these groups are
24 sophisticated.

25 They are crafty. They know what they are doing. They

1 are knowing how to lightly walk outside the law and create
2 gray, and then create death in their paths. So it is
3 absolutely imperative, from an Iowa standpoint, that is
4 touching every community. The thing that has most struck
5 me, I think, in terms of how we have seen drug trafficking
6 shift in Iowa is historically you had to come to major
7 metropolitan areas to get drugs.

8 You know, if you were a rural Iowan, you were having to
9 go to Waterloo, you are having to go to Des Moines, to a
10 city, and then you would return to your home communities.
11 The amount of drugs that are going into our small towns is
12 chilling. You know, I think of a small town like Hawarden,
13 Iowa. It is a little bitty town up North of Sioux City. I
14 happen to remember it because it is the birthplace of our
15 Lieutenant Governor.

16 We seized 5, 10, 15 pounds of methamphetamine in the
17 last 18 months from a little bitty town in Hawarden.
18 Armstrong, Iowa, Brooklyn, Iowa, that is really what is
19 troubling to me is the realization of drug trafficking in
20 Iowa and how there are large weights going into these small
21 communities.

22 And that is why we are seeing relatively rural
23 communities like Cass and Shelby counties suddenly have a
24 rash of overdoses is because it no longer is resting in the
25 metropolitan areas.

1 Senator Grassley. I have asked the questions that I
2 wanted to ask. I would like to thank Mr. Cagen for coming
3 so far to be with us on this very important issue.

4 And thanks our families that showed up here to tell a
5 very troubling and difficult story that they told us, what
6 you told all of America when you tell that story, so we
7 thank you for that. For our two witnesses from the
8 Government. I may, if I have left something out, you may
9 get some questions from me to answer in writing, but I think
10 we have covered most of the important things.

11 I will let my staff be the judgment if I left something
12 out. And did you have something for me that you want me to
13 -- oh, I think it is about the record being open, yes. Even
14 though I am the only member of Congress here, if members of
15 the Drug Caucus that aren't here, if they want to submit
16 questions, they have that right to do it. I doubt if any of
17 them will, but would you be responsive to them if they do as
18 well.

19 So I thank you all for being here. The record will
20 remain open for one week for any additional comments that
21 anybody wants to make, and also for those questions that
22 might be submitted in writing.

23 So this hearing is adjourned and thank you all for
24 participating and thank you for the public that has been
25 present as well. I hope you will help us spread the word

1 about the very danger that you have heard about here, both
2 from a law enforcement standpoint and from what it can do to
3 families, because this is a terrible problem and we have got
4 to get it solved.

5 Hearing adjourned.

6 [Whereupon, at 11:33 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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Good morning Senator Grassley,

Thank you for inviting us today.

My name is Deric Kidd. My wife, Kathy and I are the co-founders of [BecomeTheirVoice.org](https://become-their-voice.org) and advocates for The Lost Voices of Fentanyl.

Our son, Sebastian Alexander Kidd was entering his senior year. He was a multisport athlete, active in church, a musician, loved hunting and fishing, and could grill a mean steak. He was a friend, cousin, brother, and son. He was known for his beautiful eyes, infectious smile, and wonderful heart. A truly beautiful person who put others first.

Our son suffered multiple traumas in his life. He was a child of divorce, abandoned by his birth mother at age 11, lost 3 grandparents to cancer, severely bullied and falsely labeled in school. He broke his collarbone his freshman year, and also suffered multiple concussions. He was diagnosed with anxiety and depression and was put on medication for all of these reasons. Our son went through absolute hell and still put a smile on his face every day.

He was introduced to Percocet by a friend. He began self-medicating with pills purchased through SnapChat. He didn't know the pills were fake and contained fentanyl. He couldn't stop taking them, however, he was able to get some of his friends to stop and even talked some of them out of suicide so we know he knew it was wrong.

You see, it was important to him to save others because he knew their pain. But he couldn't save himself. He took half a pill on July 30th, 2021 before bed, and never woke up. We found him slumped over his bed the next morning. That image will haunt me for life. He was supposed to leave that day for a long-awaited trip to Arizona with his aunt and uncle. He never made it. Sebastian didn't want to die. If the half-pill he took had actually been Percocet, he would still be here. He would still have a chance.

Now let me tell you what I lost. I lost a piece of me that day. The boy I raised to be a man, to always do the right thing, to stand up for people, to put others first and love everyone, to respect his elders, and treat everyone with kindness. I lost the boy I coached in soccer for 10 years knowing that when his senior year came, they would make a run at the state championship. I lost proudly walking with him on senior night with his arms around his mom and me, watching him get ready for prom, and walk down the aisle to get his diploma.

I lost seeing my son and daughter go from having a love-hate relationship to being two of the closest siblings you could ever imagine. I lost hearing the constant laughter, bantering and sarcasm between them.

I lost seeing him get married and giving my speech at his wedding. Telling him that marriage and love are hard but worth every second. I lost seeing him dance with his mama, seeing my son's face when he had his first child, knowing he was going to be a better father than I ever was. Knowing that my wife will likely never hold a grandchild in her arms because now our daughter doesn't want to have kids anymore. We not only lost a child that day, we lost our future grandkids.

I lost the moment when he would beat me in a round of golf for the first time, the joy and peace I experienced with my fishing buddy on those brisk early mornings. Seeing him age gracefully and watching him grow up with his own children.

The most important thing I lost were the talks we had. The slow transition from me giving advice to my son, to me taking it from him. With no disrespect to my wife and daughter, I lost everything that day because I cannot be the man that I was or the man I wanted to be with such a huge part of me gone. The three of us are left to pick up the pieces and try and put this puzzle back together but we are always going to be missing a piece.

All these families across the nation are experiencing their own pain. All we can do is turn our pain into purpose which is why we created the becometheirvoice.org website. It's a place where we can all tell their stories and show their beautiful faces. We give presentations in schools and youth groups to educate the public in hopes of preventing this from happening to others. To make sure their deaths weren't for nothing. We all do it to help save lives.

We came here today to speak on our son's behalf and let his voice be heard. But more importantly, we came here today to speak on behalf of those that cannot be heard, the other grieving families and victims.

This is an endless cycle. This isn't just about our son or any of the lost loved ones we are discussing here today. It isn't just about the hundreds of thousands of Americans that we've lost over the years and continue to lose every day. It's also about the collateral damage left behind. It's about my wife who deals with the guilt and grief daily. It's about my daughter who struggles to function some days because of her pain and guilt. It's about my son's friends who have chosen to self-medicate because they are struggling with his death. I've taken phone calls from parents because their kids have since started to self-medicate and one even overdosed. You see, it isn't just one death. Each one trickles down and touches the lives of dozens, if not hundreds of people. Now they have to deal with the pain and the grief and the internal turmoil which may cause them to self-medicate and suffer the same fate. There is much work to be done.

Good morning Co-Chair Grassley. My name is Brooke Anderson, I am the mother of Devin Anderson who was found deceased in his bedroom on the morning of February 24th of this year. His toxicology analysis showed that he did not have any other drugs in his body other than fentanyl and nicotine. Prior to my son's death, I had never heard anything about synthetic fentanyl in the United States. The hearts of Devin's family members have been completely shattered by his devastating loss. I attend mental health therapy as well as both of my younger two children now. I am here to tell you that Devin's struggles were not a death sentence until he discovered a counterfeit pill called an M-30. The spread of fentanyl has been steady and deadly in Iowa and across the United States. The CDC estimates that more than 108,000 people in the U.S. died of drug overdoses between February 2021 and February 2022. Of those, more than 70% involved fentanyl and other synthetic opioids. This is a national emergency.

America's young adults are being deceived and poisoned every 5 minutes.

Devin was well known for his contagious laughter, his smile, his love for the Dallas Cowboys and also the Iowa Hawkeyes. He loved cats, spending time with his friends and family, listening to music, and playing video games. He was kind, caring, a hard worker, and very laid back. While growing up as a child and throughout his teenage years in high school he was active in football, soccer and wrestling. After high school, he continued to be active by playing golf during the summer months and playing in a softball tournament every July 4th with his dad. He enjoyed watching football and hanging out with friends regularly. Devin had worked a full time job since he was 16 years old and prior to his death he had just been given a raise by his employer.

Despite his supportive family, many friendships, hard work and solid earnings, he struggled with the transition from being a teen to a young adult. In 2020, I began noticing some signs that

Devin was possibly depressed. He had quit his job and didn't work for a period of time, he lived off money he had in his savings account, began selling things he had previously bought so that he could pay bills, I was getting texts at weird hours in the middle of the night, and he had begun to lose weight. His change in behavior was noticeable, and very much out of character for him.

In the spring of 2021, I got a phone call, just a few weeks apart, from both Devin's dad and my sister. They began questioning me about whether I was under any impression that Devin was using drugs. Like so many parents, I made excuses for him. "No, he's just depressed." "He wouldn't do drugs, there's no way." I was that parent. You know, the one who says "Not my child." You see, this is all part of the stigma of both mental health and substance abuse. Our kids are afraid to admit when they have a problem because even as adults, we don't even want to admit our kids have a problem. There is shame that is associated with mental health and addiction and unless you have ever felt that shame yourself or watched a loved one experience it, I am not sure you can truly understand what I am talking about.

Devin died in my home and was found February 24th, in his room, with his door closed, by himself. Narcan would not have saved his life. I could not have saved his life. His brothers could not have saved his life. Fentanyl is a silent killer, I didn't even know that my son was dead until I got a phone call at 6:35 am from his boss stating he had been trying to reach Devin for 30 minutes and he had not been answering his phone. And even then, I still had no idea what was going on. I was 30 miles from home at a wrestling workout with my youngest son and my middle son had gone down the stairs when he heard Devin's phone ringing multiple times only to find him unresponsive. My middle son heard Devin's coworker knocking at the door, went to

the door and told him Devin was not waking up and asked him to come inside to help. His coworker immediately called 911 and performed CPR on him until EMT's arrived. By the time I got home, my son had been pronounced dead and the Sherriff was sitting in my bedroom with my middle child. I was in shock, there were so many EMT's everywhere. I was never prepared for the loss of my child. Every day since, February 24th, I have turned my pain into a purpose. I have become Devin's voice and his life mattered. I have started a non profit organization called Devin's Forever 23 Foundation, Inc. and it is my mission to spread awareness and education to communities across Iowa. With the help of parents like Deric and Kathy Kidd who started Becometheirvoice.org, I am now able to go into the AHSTW Community School District following this field hearing and give a PowerPoint presentation that I am hoping will speed the process along a bit in terms of spreading awareness to junior high and high school youth. If every single one of us work together to create a difference, we not only impact one person's life, but we impact everyone influenced by them throughout their entire lifetime. One by one, we will create a ripple effect. I beg you, do not turn a blind eye and ignore this Fentanyl Epidemic our country is facing right now. It's going to take a village to make a change. Let's be the change our children and our future generations need!

Thank you for this opportunity,

Brooke Anderson

Thank you Senator Grassley for providing us with an opportunity to speak today and share the story of our son Bailey who died from fentanyl.

My name is Laurie Arwine and my husband Hans and I lost our youngest son Bailey to an accidental fentanyl overdose almost seven months ago. I want to take a minute to share with you who Bailey was and who was impacted by his death. Bailey is our youngest son and was only 22 years old when he passed away. Bailey was our blessing baby, we thought we were done having children and God blessed us with another sweet baby boy. He is a brother to Brandon and Brittany, an uncle to Axel, Leif and Lohwyn. He was a grandson and a nephew to several aunts, uncles and many cousins. Bailey was a natural athlete who excelled in basketball and track. He started all four years in basketball and scored 1,000 points by his junior year. His long legs made him a natural sprinter in track which helped the Lisbon Lions win three state championships. Bailey was known for his gentle, carefree spirit, his shy quirky smile and his genuine kindness to everyone - he never judged anyone and would be a friend to whoever needed one. He made a definite impact on those who crossed his path. There were over 500 people who attended his visitation and Celebration of Life which is a testament to how many people's lives he touched and were impacted by his death.

April 5, 2022 is the day all our lives changed forever. I remember that afternoon sitting at my desk at school watching my husband walk through the door...I could see the look of intense pain in his eyes and when I asked what was wrong, he uttered three small words that still haunt me...Bailey is gone.

We learned that Bailey had bought Xanax from someone he used to work with. Bailey had face-timed his best friend to show him the pill he bought because it looked different. His friend told him to not take it because it looked like a pressed pill. Unfortunately Bailey still took the pill. The pill Bailey thought was Xanax ended up having a lethal amount of Fentanyl. Bailey did NOT want to die and did not deserve to die from taking a pill he thought was Xanax. Bailey did not struggle from a substance abuse disorder. He was just like so many who would occasionally need Xanax.

Last week, the police investigator in charge of his case advised us they are closing the investigation of Bailey's death due to lack of evidence needed to prosecute. Their decision brought more pain and heartache knowing there will be no justice served for our son's death. The drug dealer who sold Bailey the pill is free on the streets living his life and could still be harming others selling pills.

Action needs to happen to stop drug dealers from selling pills. Action needs to happen to have stronger laws to prosecute those selling pills. Action needs to happen to stop these illegal pills from coming across our borders. Parents need to talk with their children and schools need to talk to students to create awareness about the dangers of buying pills.

Our faith and the promise knowing we will see Bailey again in heaven is the only thing that has helped us get through the pain and emptiness in our hearts we go through everyday with missing our sweet boy. One scripture that we stand on is Romans 8:28: We know that all things work together for good to those that love God and to those who are called according to his purpose. It's hard to even imagine there could be anything good that could come from Bailey's death and nothing can ever bring our son back. However, now we believe our purpose is to share his story and hopefully prevent a family from going through the heartache of losing someone they love so much.

No parent should have to lose their son, no sister or brother should have to lose their sibling, no grandparent should have to lose their grandchild, no aunt or uncle should have to lose their nephew or niece, and no friend should have to lose their best friend from fentanyl.

Fentanyl changed our lives forever. Fentanyl took away a son, a brother, an uncle, a grandson, a cousin, and a kind and caring friend to so many. Fentanyl stole our son from having a future. We need to make a stand now and do something to create awareness of the dangers of fentanyl and stop pills that kill so no other family will have to go through the heartache of losing a loved one. If our actions can take a dealer off the street, we can possibly save lives and ensure Bailey's life will not be forgotten.



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

STATEMENT

OF

STEVEN CAGEN
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
HOMELAND SECURITY INVESTIGATIONS

U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

REGARDING A FIELD HEARING ON

“DEADLY DISTRIBUTION: HOW FENTANYL CROSSES BORDERS AND CLAIMS LIVES”

BEFORE THE

SENATE CAUCUS ON INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL

Thursday, October 27, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

United States Court, Southern District of Iowa

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss Homeland Security Investigations' (HSI) efforts to disrupt the flow of fentanyl entering the United States through Mexico and combat the transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) responsible for fueling the deadly overdose epidemic. With more than 6,800 special agents located in hundreds of offices throughout the United States and the world, HSI investigates, disrupts, and dismantles terrorist, transnational, and other criminal organizations that threaten our nation's security. My statement will focus on HSI's work with foreign and domestic partners to stop the synthesis of deadly drugs abroad, so they never reach the United States; its mission at the borders to turn individual seizures into cartel-toppling investigations; its focus within the United States, specifically the Midwest, to take deadly drugs off the streets and shut down dark web vendors; and its efforts to deny cartels the firearms and illicit proceeds that fuel their operations.

As the principal investigative component of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), HSI is responsible for investigating and dismantling the TCOs flooding the United States with fentanyl and other illegal drugs fueling the overdose epidemic, as well as other contraband. To do this, HSI conducts federal criminal investigations at every location in the illicit drug supply chain: internationally, where TCOs operate and manufacture illegal drugs; at our Nation's physical border, where smugglers attempt to exploit America's legitimate trade, travel, and transportation systems; in our communities, where criminal organizations earn substantial profits from selling poison; and on the dark web. In addition to combating narcotics smuggling, HSI attacks the criminal networks operating in the United States and elsewhere that source and smuggle U.S.-origin firearms and ammunition to Mexico, fueling violence and enabling cartels to flourish.

Mexican TCOs serve as the principal source of the illicit fentanyl and methamphetamines fueling the drug overdose epidemic in the United States. TCOs manufacture these drugs using precursor chemicals sourced from China and other foreign nations. HSI targets Mexican TCOs by collecting, analyzing, and exploiting information gathered from interdictions to further ongoing investigations; developing and pursuing additional investigative leads; and executing enforcement actions to disrupt criminal activity. HSI works closely with DEA in these investigations, as DEA serves as the single point of contact for foreign drug investigations. HSI's expertise in investigating international supply chains, unique border search authority, and broad statutory authorities position the agency to target illicit shipments of fentanyl and methamphetamine precursor chemicals destined for Mexico. Depriving Mexican TCOs of these precursors is equivalent to depriving them of the oxygen they need to function; no chemicals, no drugs. As described in more detail below, HSI's efforts in this area have yielded significant results, including the seizures of hundreds of thousands of kilograms of precursor chemicals destined for Mexican TCOs.

These criminal organizations, however, have expanded beyond narcotics smuggling and have morphed into poly-criminal TCOs involved in the associated crimes of weapons trafficking, human trafficking, human smuggling, money laundering, and other crimes - all of which HSI investigates. Rather than narrowly focusing on drug trafficking, HSI combats TCOs by using its

unique and broad investigative authorities to enforce over 400 federal laws by investigating a myriad of crimes. Transnational organized crime is big business and TCOs no longer limit themselves to a single crime; likewise investigative efforts must be broad in scope to fully dismantle enterprises that often transcend borders.

HSI International Counternarcotics Efforts

HSI's efforts to combat synthetic drugs such as fentanyl begin abroad. HSI has the largest international investigative presence within DHS, comprising hundreds of HSI special agents strategically assigned to 93 offices in 56 countries. This includes offices located in Mexico, where the vast majority of fentanyl is produced, and throughout the Asia-Pacific region, where synthetic drug precursor chemicals often originate. HSI special agents stationed abroad maintain relationships with host government law enforcement partners to exchange information; coordinate and support investigations; and facilitate enforcement actions and prosecutions to disrupt and dismantle TCOs.

Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit Program

The effectiveness of our international counter-narcotics efforts is greatly enhanced by HSI's Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit (TCIU) Program. TCIUs comprise vetted foreign law enforcement officials and prosecutors who support some of HSI's most significant extraterritorial investigations and prosecutions targeting TCOs. HSI has established 14 TCIUs around the world, including in Mexico, where the team is comprised of more than 40 officers and prosecutors from their Attorney General's office. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, efforts by the HSI Mexico TCIU resulted in approximately 123 criminal arrests and the seizure of approximately \$1.1 million, 11,100 pounds of cocaine and 18,200 pounds of precursor chemicals.

Targeting the fentanyl and methamphetamine precursor chemical supply chain is an integral element of HSI's approach to stopping the production of illicit drugs. These precursors serve as the fuel the cartels need to manufacture their deadly drugs destined for American cities and streets. Blending interagency and foreign collaboration, industry partnerships, financial data, and information technology tools, HSI identifies, targets, and interdicts precursor chemical shipments destined for Mexican cartels. Disruptions to the procurement phase of the narcotics production supply chain have an exponential impact on the drugs encountered at our border and on our streets. The seizure of a kilogram of a key fentanyl precursor chemical can prevent the production of almost 20 kilograms of the processed fentanyl encountered at the Southwest Border and in our communities. Mexican cartels operate on an industrial scale when procuring precursor chemicals, and the interdiction of these shipments has a profound effect on the number of drugs reaching our country. For instance, a March 2021 HSI seizure of 750 kilograms of a fentanyl precursor chemical was estimated to yield approximately 14,821 kilograms of fentanyl at average purity encountered on the Southwest Border. This seizure not only prevented the production of a massive quantity of a deadly drug but also denied the TCO an estimated \$444.6 million in illicit proceeds. Many of these enforcement efforts are led by HSI's TCIU in Mexico, where, in addition to seizing precursor chemical shipments, they also lead investigations targeting the labs where the chemicals are synthesized into illegal drugs.

HSI's TCIUs are critical to preventing drugs from reaching our borders and yet face barriers to success. For instance, unlike other federal law enforcement agencies, HSI lacks the authority to pay salary stipends to TCIU members who serve on the frontline of combating TCOs. HSI's inability to provide these stipends results in recruitment and retention challenges. The ability to pay salary stipends to TCIU members would enhance HSI's overall strategy and efforts to disrupt Mexican cartels' illicit precursor chemical supply chains.

HSI Southwest Border Counternarcotics Efforts

The vast majority of the methamphetamines and fentanyl flooding American streets is smuggled across our border with Mexico. HSI is the primary federal law enforcement agency responsible for investigating drug seizures and other criminal activity occurring at ports of entry (POEs). Our special agents work every day with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers to identify and investigate drug smuggling organizations attempting to introduce illicit contraband into the United States, and to seize such contraband. HSI's ability to conduct complex large-scale investigations represents one of DHS's best weapons for dismantling TCOs in a manner not possible solely through border interdiction efforts. Conducting criminal investigations resulting from arrests associated with border seizures is necessary for ensuring the rule of law; however, HSI's mandate is to turn these individual seizures into multi-jurisdictional, multi-defendant, complex investigations to disrupt, dismantle, and prosecute high-level members of TCOs.

CBP's expansion of non-intrusive inspection (NII) scanning at Southwest Border POEs is poised to increase the number of CBP-origin seizures HSI special agents investigate. To keep pace, HSI will require additional staffing to support the investigation and prosecution of individuals associated with POE seizures. Recent HSI congressional appropriations tied to NII expansion represent an important, albeit limited, initial step. HSI is moving quickly to deploy these new resources to Southwest Border POEs receiving NII augmentation. Given the required NII expansion to all land border POEs, additional staffing will be essential to ensure HSI retains adequate personnel to conduct the complex investigations which degrade and remove TCO threats to the Homeland.

Border Enforcement Security Task Forces

The Jaime Zapata Border Enforcement Security Task Force (BEST) Act was signed into law in December 2012. The Act was named in honor of Jaime Zapata, an HSI special agent who, while working to combat violent drug cartels, was killed in the line of duty in Mexico. This law amended the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to formally establish the BEST program, with the primary mission of combating emerging and existing transnational organized crime by employing a threat-based/risk mitigation investigative task force model that recognizes the unique resources and capabilities of all participating law enforcement partners.

BEST units eliminate the barriers between federal and local investigations, close the gap with international partners in multinational criminal investigations, and create an environment that minimizes the vulnerabilities in our operations that TCOs have traditionally capitalized on to

exploit our nation's borders. There are currently 84 BESTs located across the United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, comprising law enforcement officers and personnel representing more than 200 federal, state, local, tribal, and international law enforcement agencies. These personnel include HSI special agents, task force officers, intelligence analysts, and investigative support personnel. Since inception through September 2022, BESTs have collectively initiated more than 49,500 investigations, resulting in approximately 60,950 criminal arrests, and seizures of more than 3 million pounds of narcotics.

HSI Domestic Counternarcotics Efforts

While much attention is given to the smuggling of narcotics across our southern border, TCOs use other methods to introduce deadly drugs into our communities. Illicit drugs continue to flow into the United States via international airports located throughout the United States. In addition to the use of drug couriers, TCOs continue to smuggle illicit narcotics destined for American communities concealed within express consignment and other parcels. In response, HSI established BEST units at international mail facilities (IMFs), express consignment hubs, and international airports acting as IMFs, as part of HSI's targeted response to the opioid crisis. The IMF and express consignment environments are a particularly significant avenue for the smuggling and transshipment of fentanyl, opioids, and other illicit narcotics. The placement of BEST units at IMFs enables the immediate application of investigative techniques on seized parcels, which aid in establishing the probable cause needed to effect enforcement actions in the United States and elsewhere on individuals associated with fentanyl and opioid-laden parcels.

HSI's Efforts in Iowa

In addition to HSI's robust presence on the border, HSI's efforts to combat TCOs continue in the interior of the United States. U.S. Interstate highways continue to represent major corridors for transshipment of narcotics, bulk cash, and weapons. Several of these corridors traverse Iowa, with Interstate 35 serving as the major north/south route through central Iowa that originates on the U.S. Southwest Border at Laredo, Texas. Additionally, Interstate 80 is a major cross-country thoroughfare traversing the northern half of the United States. Both are used extensively to transport illicit contraband. HSI's office in Omaha staffs a BEST unit comprising partner law enforcement agencies that works along the I-80 corridor in Iowa and Nebraska to combat the illicit transportation of not only narcotics, but also bulk cash and weapons that are being smuggled from the United States to TCOs in Mexico and beyond.

HSI Iowa offices in Des Moines, Cedar Rapids and Sioux City take pride in their network of partnerships, which include those with the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); CBP; U.S. Postal Inspection Service; Iowa State Patrol; Iowa Division of Criminal Investigations; Iowa Division of Narcotics Enforcement; Mid-Iowa Narcotics Enforcement Task Force; Des Moines Police Department; Woodbury County Sheriff's Office; South Sioux City Police Department; Sioux City Police Department; Buena Vista County Sheriff's Office; Storm Lake Police Department; Johnson County Drug Task Force; the Tri-County Drug Task Force in eastern Iowa; and the Midwest High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Program. In FY

2022, Midwest HIDTA efforts in Iowa resulted in 13 fentanyl-related criminal arrests and the seizure of approximately 4 kilograms of fentanyl and \$1.6 million in illicit proceeds.

HSI Des Moines Case Study

These robust partnerships enable HSI to combat TCOs engaged in illicit narcotics trafficking as well as other cross-border crimes, which greatly increase the safety of people in Iowa. For example, HSI Des Moines recently finalized an investigation resulting in the seizure of heroin and convictions for narcotics smuggling and related charges stemming from an IMF seizure at the FedEx facility in Memphis, Tennessee. On February 3, 2021, CBP officers seized a parcel from Mexico after discovering more than a kilogram of heroin – with a street value of approximately \$100,000 – concealed within 20 pairs of sandals. The package was destined for an address in Alexander, Iowa. HSI special agents subsequently conducted a controlled delivery of the package to the residence in Alexander, Iowa, which resulted in one arrest. The recipient of the parcel, a convicted felon, was armed with a handgun at the time of his arrest. On July 1, 2022, he was convicted in the Northern District of Iowa and sentenced to 180 months in federal prison for violations of 21 U.S.C. §§ 841 and 846, and subjected to the enhanced sentencing penalties under 21 U.S.C. § 851.

The investigation by HSI special agents revealed that the Mexican source of the heroin was a fugitive who had been indicted in the Northern District of Iowa in 2013 for conspiring to distribute more than 500 grams of methamphetamine in violation of 21 U.S.C. §§ 841 and 846. After fleeing to Mexico, this individual was allegedly responsible for shipping multiple packages containing narcotics from Mexico to addresses in the Northern District of Iowa. On July 11, 2021, he was arrested in California and subsequently transferred to the Northern District of Iowa. On April 29, 2022, he was convicted of numerous narcotics violations and sentenced to 188 months in federal prison.

Cyber-Related Efforts

TCOs and their illicit drug clients are increasingly tech-savvy. Many have adopted emerging technologies to replace hand-to-hand drug sales with anonymous virtual asset purchases facilitated through dark web marketplaces. These transactions may involve foreign vendors but result in the shipment of drugs to or within our country. To keep pace with rapidly evolving criminal techniques, HSI's Cyber Crimes Center (C3) performs an essential role in detecting, investigating, and preventing the sale and distribution of opioids and other illicit drugs on the dark web. With increased capabilities, cyber analytics, and trained cyber investigators and analysts, C3 supports HSI online undercover investigations targeting market site operators, vendors, and prolific buyers of opioids and other illicit drugs on the dark web. C3 also provides critical support on tracing and identifying illicit proceeds derived from criminal activity on the dark web and investigating the subsequent money laundering activities. Additionally, C3's Computer Forensics Unit and 's Computer Forensic Program are critical tools in combating the flow of drugs into the United States. From the efforts of our Computer Forensic Agents and Analysts in the field to seize, process, and analyze digital evidence, through advanced technical solutions, such as decryption and accessing secure data, digital forensics play an ever-increasing role in investigating complex multinational narcotics organizations. The Computer Forensic Unit

also provides forensic training and support to our state, local tribal, federal, and international law enforcement partners.

A top priority for HSI is to improve collective law enforcement capabilities by providing training to partner law enforcement agencies. In response to initiatives to reduce opioid demand in the United States, C3 developed a cyber-training curriculum with a focus on dark web investigations and illicit payment networks associated with opioid smuggling and distribution. This training has been successful in improving law enforcement capabilities against online marketplaces and tools for illicit trafficking. Since 2017, HSI has delivered this training course in over 70 locations worldwide to more than 15,000 state, local, federal, and international law enforcement personnel.

Southwest Border Weapons Smuggling

Part of HSI's multi-discipline approach to combating the flow of illicit drugs into the United States includes combating the flow of illicit firearms and ammunition into Mexico. TCOs use corresponding southbound pathways to repatriate cash proceeds from illegal activities and secure sufficient armaments to remain a persistent threat to Mexican security forces.

Firearms smuggled from the United States into Mexico allow the TCOs to continue their deadly operations against our Mexican law enforcement partners and the local populace. In 2021, the Government of Mexico estimated at least 342,000 U.S.-sourced firearms are illegally smuggled into Mexico every year. Mexico's National Public Security System reported 34,515 intentional homicides with 70 percent involving firearms in 2020. During this period, ATF performed traces on 19,762 firearms recovered in Mexico. ATF checks determined at least 67.7 percent were sourced from the United States with over half traced to a retail purchase.

Operation Without a Trace

HSI uses its customs authorities to target procurement networks responsible for smuggling U.S.-origin weapons into Mexico. This includes Operation Without a Trace (WaT), a unified DHS effort to fight the illegal trafficking of firearms and ammunition from the United States into Mexico. WaT is a federal partnership among HSI, CBP, ATF, and the Government of Mexico focused on the illicit purchase, transport, and distribution of firearms, firearms components, and ammunition from the United States to Mexico. WaT is one of only three whole-of-government efforts recognized by the National Security Council to combat this threat. WaT's three-pronged approach leverages intelligence, interdiction, and investigative assets to identify, disrupt, and dismantle TCOs trafficking firearms. In FY 2022, WaT partners initiated 272 criminal investigations resulting in 302 arrests, and the seizure of 514 firearms, 1,019 magazines and more than 284,175 rounds of ammunition, all destined to TCOs in Mexico.

Illicit Finance – Following the Money

U.S. illicit drug sales continue to net tens of billions of dollars in illicit proceeds annually. One of the most effective methods for dismantling Mexican cartels and other TCOs engaged in narcotics trafficking is to attack the criminal proceeds that are the lifeblood of their operations.

Every HSI investigation has a financial element. Our special agents identify and seize the illicit proceeds of crime and target financial networks that transport, launder, and hide ill-gotten proceeds. With significant access to financial and trade data, HSI is uniquely positioned to identify TCO schemes that hide illegal drug proceeds within the stream of legitimate commerce, on vehicles, vessels, and persons departing the United States, or when crossing a digital border, such as the movement of funds electronically, including in the form of virtual assets, such as cryptocurrency. HSI's financial efforts in FY 2022 resulted in at least 2,551 criminal arrests, 1,563 criminal indictments, and 1,002 convictions.

Despite the rise of alternative stores of value, such as virtual assets, bulk cash smuggling remains a key mechanism for TCO repatriation of drug proceeds. Criminal actors often avoid traditional financial institutions that must comply with Bank Secrecy Act reporting requirements, instead repatriating their illicit proceeds through conveyances such as commercial and private aircraft passenger and commercial vehicles, maritime vessels, and via pedestrian crossings at our land borders.

HSI investigations have identified that TCOs are increasingly augmenting bulk currency smuggling with use of alternative value platforms in response to financial regulations and law enforcement efforts to identify money laundering networks. A single movement of TCO proceeds may involve bulk cash, stored value cards, money orders, virtual assets, wire transfers, funnel accounts, and trade-based money laundering. HSI adapts to evolving criminal methodologies by leveraging new law enforcement technologies to identify money laundering activity through these emerging alternative value platforms and seize criminal assets. HSI investigations related to virtual assets have risen from one criminal investigation in 2011, to over 530 criminal investigations in FY 2022. In FY 2022, HSI seized over \$4 billion in virtual assets. This marked increase signifies growing confidence in virtual asset use by bad actors and requires that law enforcement become increasingly technically proficient in performing these complex investigations.

National Bulk Cash Smuggling Center

Established in 2009, HSI's National Bulk Cash Smuggling Center (BCSC) is a critical component of the agency's and overall U.S. Government's efforts to combat bulk cash smuggling by Mexican cartels and other TCOs. The BCSC operates strategic programs that leverage advanced data analytics, interagency partnerships, and law enforcement technology systems to identify complex money laundering networks and provide support for HSI financial investigations. The criminal intelligence functions of the BCSC provide operational analysis in support of HSI-led interdiction efforts, including port profiles highlighting cash flow activity at targeted POEs and corridor analyses to assist in planning the timing, location, and strategy for interdiction operations. The BCSC also administers a targeted, investigation-focused license plate reader program to identify larger criminal networks and a warrant-based GPS tracking program that provides valuable intelligence on the behaviors of criminal groups engaged in bulk cash smuggling. Since its inception, the BCSC has initiated or substantially contributed to over 3,470 criminal arrests and seizures of bulk cash totaling over \$1.73 billion.

Conclusion

HSI's unique border authorities and dynamic approaches to combatting drug trafficking allow us to pursue impactful investigations and attack all aspects of the organizations responsible for this ongoing public health crisis. While our collective efforts are executed with diligence and a commitment to public safety, work remains at all levels – internationally, on the border, in Iowa, and throughout the United States. HSI is committed to continuing the fight against the overdose epidemic on all fronts.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today and for your continued support of HSI and the critical role it plays in attacking the fentanyl and opioid supply chains. I look forward to your questions.

- Thank you, Senator Grassley. Stopping the flow of poisons, like fentanyl and methamphetamine, into our communities remains one of our highest law enforcement priorities. Those that claim that drug trafficking is a non-violent offense ignore the grim reality of addiction and the overdose deaths plaguing Iowa. As a drug prosecutor for over 15 years and now as the Commissioner of the Iowa Department of Public Safety, I have heard time and again from suffering individuals that they would not wish their addiction on their worst enemy. I have had folks tell me that recovering from a gunshot wound is far easier than recovering from an opioid addiction. The influx of fentanyl coming into Iowa is touching every corner of our state. Both urban and rural communities are reeling especially as these highly addictive and deadly opioids are being mass marketed and falsely branded as prescription pain medications like Percocet or OxyContin.
- Even though Iowa maintains one of the nation's lowest drug overdose death rates, ranking 46th among all states... we're still experiencing the same trend that's playing out across the country. The Iowa

Department of Health and Human Services reports a 34% increase in drug overdose deaths since 2019... rising from 350 total deaths to 470. This includes a 64% increase in overdose deaths caused by opioids... and a 120% increase in drug overdose deaths involving young Iowans under the age of 25. Last year, illicit fentanyl was implicated in 83% of all Iowa opioid-related overdose deaths... compared to 31% just five years prior.

- The volume of fentanyl being seized by law enforcement throughout Iowa is **shocking** even to the most veteran narcotics agents and drug chemists. To be frank, I'm surprised our overdose deaths are not higher. To put that concern into context ... In all of 2021, the DCI's Criminalistics Laboratory analyzed 17,163 fentanyl pills disguised as prescription drugs. In the first nine months of 2022, that number has grown fivefold to 92,635— let me repeat that – 92,635 fentanyl pills disguised as prescription drugs. Seizures of powder-based fentanyl is also skyrocketing as we have seized 22,735 grams of powdered

fentanyl, three times as much as last year. The seizures keep piling up and there is little sign of it stopping.

- As you can see, the fentanyl problem is real, it's in our neighborhoods, it's affordable and plentiful, and there are irreversible consequences for unsuspecting Iowans.
- Drug traffickers predominately from Mexico are using makeshift pill mills to turn fentanyl powder into pills that have the color and markings of prescription drugs. As you can see from the photos here today, the pill presses used by the cartels can create nearly flawless reproductions of common prescription drugs. As of late, the cartels have now taken to targeting children with brightly-colored variations that appear like candy. Just a few weeks ago, Des Moines Metro officers seized 150 multi-colored pills that were found to contain methamphetamine. If our seasoned narcotics agents and drug chemists cannot immediately tell the difference, our children certainly shouldn't be expected to.

- According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, two (2) milligrams of fentanyl can be lethal depending on body size and tolerance. For comparison purposes, the tiny granules you see on the lead of the No. 2 pencil in the photo to my right represents a lethal dose and can stop a beating heart.
- The Drug Enforcement Administration has found that 4 out of every 10 counterfeit pills submitted to their lab contains a lethal dose. If we apply that data point to Iowa, more than 37,000 lethal fentanyl pills have been seized this year alone. We are truly to the point that anyone choosing to take one of these pills is playing a deadly game of Russian Roulette.
- Here in Iowa, law enforcement is intensifying its efforts to dismantle fentanyl trafficking networks using data-driven strategies to identify and address problem areas across the state. We are using intelligence information, reports from law enforcement, and public health information to drive our enforcement efforts.

- In late 2020 for example, our narcotics investigators began working with multiple agencies, including the Tri-County Drug Task Force, to investigate a drug trafficking organization operating in the Northern District of Iowa with ties to Mexico.

After a months-long investigation, law enforcement obtained a search warrant for a home located in Waterloo. While searching that residence, officers found over 90 pounds of methamphetamine, 23 pounds of fentanyl, approximately 40,000 tablets containing a mixture of fentanyl and tramadol and 6,000 pure fentanyl tablets behind a false wall in the basement.

- To date, 14 individuals have been indicted for federal drug-related crimes, and 10 individuals have been charged with state-level money laundering and drug-related offenses.
- Another example of our strategy to dismantle fentanyl trafficking networks can be seen in the recent federal indictment of six Cass County residents for conspiracy to distribute fentanyl after a series of overdoses rocked rural Cass and Shelby Counties.

- In the span of just a few months, those two small, rural counties had five fentanyl overdoses, two of which were fatal. Agents further learned that the distribution of Naloxone in those two counties had risen sharply. Once the size and scope of the problem had been identified state, federal, and local law enforcement from both Iowa and Nebraska initiated a proactive and targeted investigation designed to root out the source of these overdoses. It took six months of diligence and hard work but the efforts of law enforcement paid off in June of this year when a grand jury handed down six federal indictments.
- It is my sincere hope that after hearing from everyone today, Iowans and our elected officials will have a greater understanding and appreciation for the pervasiveness and dangers of fentanyl, and how law enforcement is doing all we can to stop this epidemic.

Thank you.