

*Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025*

## **Remarks on Signing the Halt All Lethal Trafficking of Fentanyl Act and Exchange With Reporters**

*July 16, 2025*

*The President.* Nice to see you. Nice to see you. Well, thank you very much. Please. It's an honor to be with you. We're making a lot of—progress in our country—generally too. But this is a very special time because we've worked very hard to put ourselves in this position.

Today we strike a righteous blow to the drug dealers, narcotic traffickers, and criminal cartels that we've all been hearing so much about for so many years and very little has been done. And we take a historic step toward justice for every family touched by the fentanyl scourge as we sign the HALT Fentanyl Act into law. Good job. Good job. *[Applause]*

We'll get them. we'll get them. Thank you very much.

With this bill, we are officially and permanently classifying all fentanyl-related substances as Schedule I narcotics, which is actually a very big deal. And it doesn't sound like much. It's a big deal, as they will tell you—meaning anyone caught trafficking these illicit poisons will be punished with a mandatory 10-year minimum sentence in prison.

We'll be getting the drug dealers, pushers, and peddlers off our street, and we will not rest until we have ended the drug overdose epidemic. And it's been getting a little bit better, but it's horrible. It's horrible. We're going to end it once and for all.

And we're pleased to be joined on this occasion by my future DEA Administrator—going to be a very important position—Terry Cole. Where is Terry Cole? Hello, Terry Cole. I hope you're as good as they say, Terry. I hope you're as good as Glenn Youngkin says, because it was his recommendation that got you this job. You'd better do a good job, or I'm blaming Glenn. *[Laughter]* Glenn, I'm going to blame you if he's no good. And who the hell knows, but I have a feeling he's going to be great.

Is he that good?

*Governor Glenn A. Youngkin of Virginia.* He's that good.

*The President.* All right. Good. You'd better be good. *[Laughter]*

But it was really—Glenn has had tremendous experience with Terry, and he said he's fantastic. He did the job like nobody that you've seen, and we take your word for it. Thank you very much, Glenn.

Also with us is Secretary Kristi Noem, who is doing a fantastic job. Where's Kristi? Where are you? Kristi? Hi, Kristi. She has been doing a great job with Tom Homan, who's fantastic. He's also central casting. He does serve the central casting role too, doesn't he? *[Laughter]* I—he's—and he's a great guy.

Special Envoy Steve Witkoff. Steve, thank you very much. Thank you. Good job. And we have some good news on Gaza and good news on a couple of things that we're working on at a very high level. But you've done a fantastic job. Thank you very much.

My nominee to lead the Office of National Drug Control Policy, Sara Carter. Sara. Great reporter too. She was a very tough and good reporter. And you've done a fantastic job, so now you'll be able to put all that experience to work.

*Office of National Drug Control Policy Director-designate Sara Carter.* Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* No more criticizing or anything else. You've got to do it yourself, and you're going to do a great job. [*Laughter*] You know, as reporters do on occasion. Thank you very much. Thanks, Sara. Good luck.

Governors Glenn Youngkin, Jeff Landry, and Kelly Armstrong. Where are you? Stand up. Thank—great. Hi, fellas. Hi. How are you?

And great friends of ours, Senators Chuck Grassley—Chuck. Fantastic. You look fantastic. Looks like he's 44 years old. He—you look great, Chuck. We're proud of you. Jim Banks. Jim. Thank you, Jim. Good job. Ron Johnson. Ron? Good. We got that bill passed, Ron. We got it passed. Thank you for all your help too.

Ashley Moody. Ashley, thank you very much. Jim Risch. Thank you, Jim. And you're doing a great job on the committees, and you're getting them through, the people that we need. Right? I appreciate it, Jim, very much.

*Senator James R. Risch.* With your urging, Mr. President.

*The President.* I urge him like, "Jim, you've got to get going." No, Jim has been fantastic. Bill Cassidy. Thank you, Bill, very much. Thank you very much. And Roger Marshall. Roger, thank you.

And, by the way, I have to say, John Thune called. He said: "Can you get my Senators back? We're taking a vote." So we're going to go as quickly as you can. And if you feel, like, the urge, just get out. And we got to get all these bills signed—a lot of them related to what we're doing. So don't have the urge to stay. I won't be insulted if you walk out. But he just called. He said, "Could you get them back as soon as possible?"

Representatives Morgan Griffin [Griffith; White House correction]; Brett Guthrie; Andy Biggs; Andy Barr; Buddy Carter; Addison McDowell; Troy Balderson—hi, Troy; Randy Feenstra—thank you, Randy; Scott Franklin; Tony Gonzales; John Joyce; Dan Meuser; Mike Carey; Scott Fitzgerald; Diana Harshbarger; Bob Latta—that's a good group of people; Hal Rogers; Mike Rulli; and Nick Langworthy. Thank you. We got a lot of great people.

That's a lot of political talent we have. A lot of political talent. Thank you very much.

Thanks as well to State Attorneys General Brenna Bird—thank you, Brenna, wherever you may be, because, you know, Brenna—she was the first one in that State to endorse Trump. Thank you very—I don't forget those things, even though this is nonpolitical today. Okay? [*Laughter*]

Alan Wilson, Chris Carr, and Marty Jackley. Thank you all very much. Thank you.

So, 6 months ago, we came into office and inherited the worst drug crisis in American history by far. They did nothing. For four long years, Joe Biden surrendered our borders to the most evil and vicious traffickers, networks, and everything else on the planet Earth, allowing foreign drug cartels to carve out a massive footprint on American soil. We were doing nothing.

This open-borders nightmare flooded our country with fentanyl and with people that shouldn't be here—some of the worst people on Earth—and illicit drugs decimated American communities and left us with the largest law enforcement challenge in our country's history. And hopefully, we'll always be the largest. I can't imagine anything being worse. They allowed millions and millions of criminals into our country—11,888 murderers, 50 percent of whom murdered more than one person.

On day one of the Trump administration, we declared an all-out war on the dealers, smugglers, traffickers, and cartels. Within moments of taking office, I deployed the U.S. military to our border and unleashed the patriots of ICE and Border Patrol to defend our country from an invasion. This was an invasion. This wasn't people coming in. This was an invasion of our country, allowed to happen by people either that didn't care or were just stupid people. Stupid people.

I also designated the Mexican drug cartels as foreign terrorist organizations. And, within a few short weeks, believe it or not, if you remember now, we've even surpassed that, but we achieved the most secure border in U.S. history. And last month, we had the lowest number of illegal border crossings ever recorded. We had—in June, the number was actually zero.

Now, even I don't believe that but—[*laughter*—we're going to take it. How can you go from hundreds of thousands to zero? But that's what they say. And these are very liberal—these are very liberal people that do the recording, so I think we're going to have to take it. But the number was zero in June.

Can't get much better than that, right?

*Participant.* Not much.

*The President.* On day one, I signed Executive orders to create new Homeland Security Task Forces marshaling the full power of Federal law enforcement to eradicate transnational criminal networks and traffickers from our soil. We wanted them out.

Two weeks ago, we secured the resources necessary to achieve that mission when I signed the "One Big Beautiful Bill" into law. And I want to thank you all. I want to thank you. Hi.

I want to thank you all. You did a great job. And you could go point after point, how good it is. You know, they have just a hit against that. It's one of the great—biggest tax cuts in history. Biggest—really the biggest everything in history. Biggest—we have things in terms of security, in terms of securing our country, taking care of our police officers, law enforcement, our ICE and Border Patrol patriots.

I call them patriots because that's what they are. These are strong people, tough people that love our country. If they weren't tough, they wouldn't survive.

But we do more for the country in that bill, I think, than just about any bill that's been passed. And we're going to have to start speaking about it, because the Democrats use it—they say it represents death. How effective is that, right? That's pretty good. It represents death. That's all they have. They only have lies. That's the only thing they have. They don't have policy. They can't get people elected. They don't have good candidates.

They don't have anything, but they do have two things: They stick together—they stick together like glue—and they always come up with a good little tagline. This tagline is "death." And no, the death is them. We're the ones that are giving life. We're giving life with that bill.

And there's so many good things, whether it's no tax on tips—think of that—no tax on Social Security, no tax on overtime. If you buy a car, you want to buy a car, you get a deduction of interest on your mortgage. So think of that. Things that were never even a possibility. And then so much else, in terms of health, in terms of providing care.

It's really just a fantastic bill, and it's about time that we're going to start. And we'll start talking about it, but once we do, I think we're going to have the greatest midterm that you've ever seen, because this thing really is amazing. And I want to thank all of the Senators in particular—for getting it done—for getting it done.

It also makes the largest investment in the U.S. Coast Guard since World War II, ensuring that we have assets—and all of the assets needed to vanquish the cartels from the waterways of North America. We're building a lot of Coast Guard ships that go very speedily along the water, and they're very lethal.

They're very powerful, and that's what we need, because a lot of it comes in as we block up the border, they start using the water. That's a good—I could use that. They block up the border, we start using the water. And that's what happens. They start using the water. Who would think? They even actually developed small submarines. You saw that, right? Small submarines to get their drugs in. And it's incredible, but we've stopped them.

I've also directed the Department of Justice to seek maximum sentences for fentanyl traffickers. We're going to absolutely do the maximum. Since my Inauguration, the DOJ has seized over 4,500 pounds of fentanyl, which is a record, including with the enormous Sinaloa Cartel bust in May—one of the toughest cartels out there—the largest fentanyl bust ever in United States history.

And now with the signing of the HALT Fentanyl Act in just a few moments, we are delivering another defeat for the savage drug smugglers and criminals and the cartels who have a tremendous amount to say about Mexico. If you want to be nice about it—I'm trying to be nice about it—they have very strong controls over Mexico. We have to do something about that. Can't let that happen.

The Mexican authorities are petrified. They're petrified to show up at their office. They're petrified to go to work because the cartels have a tremendous grip on Mexico and the politicians and the people that get elected.

For years, the monsters who manufacture illicit fentanyl have sought to skirt legal restrictions by making minor variations of the chemical compound, and in the process, they've developed even more toxic versions of the drug.

One common variant, known as carfentanil, is a—it's very—it's becoming more and more common. It's 100 times more potent than the original version of fentanyl. Can you imagine? Look at what you have to suffer with the original. I mean, this is a hundred times more potent, and it's happening stronger—stronger, more and more—and more and more dangerous.

And as you know—and I have a very good relationship with President Xi of China, but I imposed a 20-percent tariff on China because of the fentanyl. And I call it a penalty. It's a penalty because China delivers much of the fentanyl. Some people would say all of it. They deliver it into Mexico and even into our own country.

We have a 20 percent—so they pay billions of dollars in—billions of dollars in damages for what they've done. And I think we're going to work it out so that China is going to end up going from that to giving the death penalty to the people that create this fentanyl and send it into our country, whether it's through other countries or directly.

I believe that we would have had that deal a long time ago. I shook hands with them. And then we had a rigged election, and we had somebody else come in, and they didn't know anything about a deal for the death penalty. The death penalty is going to be imposed on people from China that make fentanyl and send it into our country. I believe that's going to happen soon, but as of today, all fentanyl-related substances will be banned forever, and those who traffic in these deadly poisons will be put behind bars for a very long period of time.

We're joined today by just a few of the millions of families ravaged by this scourge, including Greg Swan from Michigan, who carries with him the heartbreaking loss of his beautiful son Drew. Drew became addicted to opioids after being prescribed painkillers following a sports

injury. Got injured—and this is happening so much. Got injured in sports and ends up—you leave the hospital a week later and you're addicted.

But he fought through it and got himself clean. Then one day, Drew took a pill laced with fentanyl. He took it just casually. He thought it would be okay. Took a chance, and he thought it'd be okay. And it didn't work out. And he tragically lost his life.

And, Greg, I'd like you to come forward and, if you could, just say a few words about your wonderful, wonderful son, please.

*West Bloomfield, MI, resident Gregory Swan.* Thank you, Mr. President. Honor of my life.

*The President.* Thank you very much.

*Mr. Swan.* Thank you. Thank you so much, Mr. President. I will be brief.

It's the honor of my life to be here, and Drew was a—the happiest day of my life was when he was born, and he always called me his hero until the day he died. And his passing ruined, I thought, my life. And every parent back here that I meet and in the audience, some of my friends—their life is gutted when they lose a kid. There's despair, and there's hopelessness.

But we've been able to find some repose in going out and advocating, and we want to hit every school in America. There's 26,727 of them. We want to go into every one. The kids are silent when they hear we lost somebody to this. And we tell our story, and they leave unequivocally ready to run away from fentanyl.

I would just like to say thank you, Mr. President, for stopping the border crossings. Full stop. Mike drop. I'll step back and—but I just—it was amazing what you did. We were being gaslit, and you came and lit a fire to that story, and we're a lot safer for it.

Thank you so much.

*The President.* Thank you, Greg.

*Mr. Swan.* Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Let me see your boy.

*Mr. Swan.* Here he is.

Thank you.

*The President.* [Inaudible]

*Mr. Swan.* Yes. Thank you so much. Thank you.

*The President.* That's tough stuff.

We're also grateful to be joined by California native, Anne Fundner, who lost her beautiful eldest son Weston to fentanyl when he was just 15 years old.

Exactly 1 year ago today, Anne delivered a moving tribute to Weston at the Republican National Convention. People that saw it have not forgotten it. And, Anne, I'd like you to please come up and say a few words about your wonderful boy.

Thank you. Please.

*Southern California resident Anne Fundner.* Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Thank you, darling.

*Ms. Fundner.* Thank you so much. It's always nice to see you. It's an honor.

Good afternoon, Mr. President and distinguished guests. My name is Anne Fundner.

*The President.* I'll hold that. Come here. I'm going to hold that.

*Ms. Fundner.* Thank you.

*The President.* Okay?

*Ms. Fundner.* And I'm an "Angel" parent. One year ago today, on July 16, I stood in front of America and told the story of my son Weston at the RNC and about how he was a beautiful, loving—had a wonderful life. We did everything right, but one pill, one mistake given by a friend under peer pressure took his life.

In the last 4 years, fentanyl became the number-one killer of Americans ages 15 to 48, and children under 14 are the fastest growing demographic.

[*Ms. Fundner continued her remarks, concluding as follows.*]

Thank you for keeping America safe and for our children. And this is what we voted for, Mr. President.

God bless you. God bless our "Angel" families, who are all here with us today, and all of you sitting up here with us. And God bless America. Thank you so much.

*The President.* God bless your beautiful boy.

*Ms. Fundner.* Thank you.

*The President.* Thank you so much.

*Ms. Fundner.* You can have that. Would you like that?

*The President.* Yes, I would.

*Ms. Fundner.* I would love to give that to you.

*The President.* Thank you.

*Ms. Fundner.* Thank you.

*The President.* You can hold that.

*Ms. Fundner.* Thank you. Thank you.

*The President.* Thank you very much. It's just crazy that we have to even be doing this. It's so sad. It should be so unnecessary that we—we stand here for years and years doing the same thing over and over. It's terrible.

A friend of mine—a longtime friend of mine is Jackie Siegel and her beautiful children. Her husband David just passed away. David Siegel was a great developer—great, great developer, great guy, friend of mine. But her children, Jordan, Jacqueline, and Drew come from Florida. Jackie lost her beautiful daughter Victoria to drugs when Victoria was just 18 years old—a beautiful person. And this April, Jackie lost her sister Jessica to fentanyl. In her daughter's honor, Jackie founded Victoria's Voice.

And I'd like to ask Jackie to come up and say a few words about her daughter, her husband, her family. She's—comes from a great family, and they've been fighting this scourge for a long time. Thank you very much, Jackie.

Thank you, sweetheart.

*Florida resident Jackie Siegel.* Thank you.

Mr. President, it's an honor to be here today on behalf of our family, my late husband, and all of the other affected families for this important signing on a—on this bipartisan issue. Ten years ago, when our daughter, 18 years old, passed—Victoria, she was 18; she passed away of a drug overdose—we formed the Victoria's Voice Foundation, and the Trump administration was very helpful in passing the CARA Act, which saved many lives back then, bringing out the Narcan.

*[Ms. Siegel continued her remarks, concluding as follows.]*

And also, on top of this, with the signing of this important—the act that you're doing, we are joining—Victoria's Voice is joining with Founding Fathers, and we're going to start the "Angel Army." So we're even growing even more under this Trump administration.

*The President.* Great.

*Ms. Siegel.* And we're going to spend the rest of our lives doing this.

Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Thank you, Jackie.

*Ms. Siegel.* Thank you.

*The President.* That will be very effective. *[Inaudible]*

*Ms. Siegel.* Thank you for helping me.

*The President.* Take care of yourself. Okay?

*Ms. Siegel.* Thank you.

*The President.* Thank you. That army will be very effective—knowing Jackie. So, thank you very much, Jackie.

Everyone knows someone touched by the incredible crisis that we've all been watching. All over the world, they're watching. And other countries have the problem, but I don't think there are too many that have it more seriously than us. They come here, and they rip us, they rip us so badly, the cartels and all of the others, because we're sort of a rich country, and that's where the money is. So it happens.

People say, "Why is it so much?" Because we have money. We're richer than other countries, so they come here more. They take the money like taking candy from a baby.

So today, on behalf of all Americans who have lost a loved one to opioids, we renew our vow to liberate America from this horrible plague.

And I hope you're going to do a fantastic job. You have no idea how important you are. You have, like, maybe the most important job, just about, in Government. There's nothing more important than what you're doing, so I wish you a lot of luck, and we'll be there to help you all the way along. Okay?

Once again, I want to thank Congress for passing this important bill and for all the work you've done over the last 2 weeks, all of you. What a job you've all done. It's—and it was—the Congress men and women and the Senate was—has been unbelievable.

And I'd like to ask, if you want, stand right up here while I sign the bill, and then we're going to get you right back so you can keep passing other bills and make America great again, right? *[Laughter]* Okay. Thank you very much. It's great to have you.

*[At this point, the President moved to the signing desk.]*

All right, I'm doing good, Chuck.

Okay. Are you all set? I feel very, very protected in here, John. *[Laughter]* Very protected.

*Senator Shelley Moore Capito.* Yes, we're getting closer and closer.

*Senator William M. Cassidy.* We want to make sure it's signed. *[Laughter]*

*[The President signed the bill is signed.]*

*The President.* And this is not an autopen, right? *[Laughter]* That's for sure. That's great. Thank you very much, everybody.

*Participant.* Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Okay. Here you go.

*Senator Charles E. Grassley.* Thank you.

*The President.* Pass these out.

*[The President distributed signing pens.]*

Pass them out. Okay. You can pass them out. We'll give some to the back too. Okay. We'll just pass them around.

Thank you very much, everybody. This is really an honor. Very important—one of the more important things that we'll ever sign, I'd suspect. And thank you all for the great job.

*Participants.* Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Thank you all for the great job.

Thank you very much, everybody.

*[The President visited with participants. As the President exited the event, several reporters began asking questions at once.]*

*Attorney General Pamela J. Bondi*

*Q.* Sir, do you think your—sir, your Attorney General was in here, your FBI leadership. Do you still have confidence in that team, sir?

*The President.* Total.

*Department of Justice Files Concerning Deceased Convicted Sex Offender Jeffrey Epstein*

*Q.* Are you appointing a Special Counsel to investigate the Jeffrey Epstein investigation?

*The President.* I have nothing to do with it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House Border Czar Thomas D. Homan; Gov. Jeffrey M. Landry of Louisiana; Gov. Kelly M. Armstrong of North Dakota; Iowa State Attorney General Brenna Bird; Kansas State Attorney Alan Wilson; Georgia State Chris Carr; South Dakota State Attorney General Marty J. Jackley; and former President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. S. 331, approved July 16, was assigned Public Law No. 119–26. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on July 17.

*Categories:* Bill Signings and Vetoes : Halt All Lethal Trafficking of Fentanyl Act, signing remarks; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Armstrong, Kelly M.; Balderson, W. Troy; Banaks, Jim; Barr, Garland H. "Andy," IV; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Biggs, Andrew S.; Bird, Brenna; Capito, Shelley Moore; Carey, Mike; Carr, Chris; Carter, Earl L. "Buddy"; Cassidy, William M.; Cole, Terrance C.; Crater, Sara; Feenstra, Randall L.; Fitzgerald, Scott L.; Franklin, C. Scott; Fundner, Anne; Gonzales, E. Anthony; Grassley, Charles E.; Griffith, H. Morgan; Guthrie, S. Brett; Harshbarger, Diana L.; Homan, Thomas D.; Jackley, Marty J.; Johnson, Ronald H.; Joyce, John P.; Langworthy, Nick; Latta, Robert E.; Lnadry, Jeffrey M.; Marshall, Roger W.; McDowell, Addison; Meuser, Daniel P.; Moody, Ashley B.; Noem, Kristi L.; Risch, James E.; Rogers, Harold D.; Rulli, Michael; Siegel, Florida; Siegel, Jackie; Siegel, Jacqueline; Siegel, Jordan; Swan, Greg; Thune, John R.; Wilson, Alan; Witkoff, Steven C.; Xi Jinping; Youngkin, Glenn Aa.

*Subjects:* Border security; China, President; China, synthetic opioid supply chain; China, trade with U.S.; Department of Justice, investigation documents pertaining to deceased convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Foreign narcotics traffickers; Gaza, conflict with Israel; Halt All Lethal Trafficking of Fentanyl Act; Illegal drugs, interdiction efforts; Illegal immigration; Israel, military operations in Gaza; Louisiana, Governor; North Dakota, Governor; Opioid epidemic, efforts to combat; Secretary of Homeland Security; Senate majority leader; Tax Code reform; Transnational criminal organizations; U.S. Border Patrol; U.S. Coast Guard; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East; Virginia, Governor; White House Border Czar.

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