

Finally, since his nomination to serve as U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, Mr. Martin appears to have attempted to scrub much of his public commentary from the internet. For example, nearly 1,000 hours of his podcasts have been removed from online platforms, such as Spotify and Apple Podcasts, interfering with the Committee's ability to thoroughly examine his record.

He is trying to cleanse his past so he doesn't have to explain it. The fact is, his relationship with this man, presenting him an award at the President's personal club in New Jersey and that then his being praised on it afterward, is a clear indication to me that he should never be seriously considered for this job of U.S. Attorney.

But let him come before us. Under oath, let him explain it. Let him try to tell us why this man is such an "extraordinary leader, an extraordinary person," and why this brand of anti-Semitism that he peddles should be tolerated by anyone, let alone the President of the United States.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

FENTANYL

Mrs. MOODY. Mr. President, good afternoon. I rise today in the Senate Chamber for the very first time as a U.S. Senator to address a topic that unfortunately has become important to so many States, so many communities, so many families across this great Nation.

Before I became a U.S. Senator and one of your colleagues, I was the Florida attorney general. For the past 6 years in that position, I made it my mission every day to fight against the opioid crisis and put poison peddlers that sought to do harm to our families behind bars.

As many of you know, fentanyl now kills more Americans than any other drug by far, and it is the leading cause of death for working-age and fighting-age men and women. It is also a cause of death of infants and children that are exposed to the substance, and that number is increasing exponentially.

Florida is no stranger to the opioid epidemic. We suffered from a pill mill crisis, and we had to address that by tightening our laws and making sure people had access to help. Following that, we saw a surge of fentanyl pouring into our country and people overdosing from that drug.

Fentanyl now claims 70,000 lives a year. It is the deadliest drug our Nation has ever encountered. That is why it is vital that we continue to not lose focus that this is the deadliest thing facing our men and women right now. This is our challenge. We cannot be distracted, and we have to stop this drug from coming across our borders and into our communities.

That is why we have to continue to provide law enforcement the tools they need to get this drug off our streets and make sure we are providing life-saving medications like Naloxone to first responders and that people who are struggling with addiction know where to get help.

After 4 years of a wide-open border and free range given to drug cartels to smuggle illicit substances into our country, it is no surprise that our Nation was flooded with fentanyl.

In Florida, we fought back despite the surge. Our law enforcement officers were up for the task. Our leaders gave us additional resources. Florida led the Nation in fentanyl seizures.

I, back in 2023, called for the cartels to be labeled "foreign terrorist organizations." President Biden ignored our call. I called for the border to be closed and the then-head of DHS to be fired for allowing drug smugglers and countless amounts of fentanyl to flood our country. Those calls were also ignored.

So Florida took Biden to court. First, when he stopped deporting those here illegally, committing serious felonies against our citizens, we took him to court. Then, when he started welcoming in and paroling everyone into the Nation that was barely vetted, we took him to court, and we won.

We also sent Florida law enforcement to the border to slow down the flow of drugs. We ramped up interdiction efforts with Florida Highway Patrol and Florida Department of Law Enforcement. We fought back with everything that we had.

The death and destruction caused by illicit fentanyl started to decline. We started to see hope. Before I left the Attorney General's Office, Florida reported 2 straight years of reductions in the number of drug-related deaths. According to a recent FDLE Drugs Identified in Deceased Persons by Medical Examiners annual report, fentanyl deaths in our State of Florida dropped 10 percent. This rate of decline is well ahead of the national average, which declined by about 2 percent during the same time.

Still, thousands across our Nation are dying—tens of thousands—and we cannot take our eyes off the ball. While we have had success in Florida, we must push forward across the rest of the Nation to deliver accountability and protection for the American people.

Florida has always been a leader in law and order, and we have understood the danger presented by fentanyl. We understand that many Americans take this deadly drug not even knowing that it is in something else they are ingesting within counterfeit pills.

We classified fentanyl as a schedule I controlled substance back in 2017. This allows easier prosecutions for these types of cases.

It is time that the Federal Government follow the request and the pleas of national law enforcement organizations, including the DEA, which is calling for fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances to be scheduled permanently as a schedule I controlled substance.

When I got to Washington, one of my first actions was to join the HALT Fentanyl Act as a cosponsor. As attorney general, I led other States in call-

ing on Congress to pass this bill. Now as Florida's newest U.S. Senator, I will work tirelessly to make sure this gets done.

I am so proud of my Senate colleagues. Last month, we passed the HALT Fentanyl Act through the Senate, and now it is in the hands of the U.S. House. This bill will ensure Federal agents and prosecutors have the tools they need to send a strong message to drug traffickers: If they continue to bring poison into our country, they will be held accountable. That has always been the case in Florida, and I am so proud of my friend and predecessor, former Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi, who is taking this fight directly to the cartels.

The American people gave our great President, President Trump, a mandate last November. That was to restore law and order, make sure people were held accountable for their crimes. We believe that as a Floridian—the first Floridian President in our Nation's history—he is going to take that approach we have had in Florida to the rest of the Nation.

While my calls for a closed border and a declaration of drug cartels as "foreign terrorist organizations" fell on Biden's deaf ears, it is no surprise that President Trump immediately got to work on this. On day one, he closed the border. We have seen a 93-percent drop in illegal crossings since then. Turns out we didn't need a new law; we needed a new President. As one of his first acts, he declared cartels as "foreign terrorist organizations."

I am incredibly excited to work alongside my new U.S. Senate colleagues and President Trump as we begin to make America safe again, and this includes voting based on priorities that will make our communities and families safe.

We have a great opportunity in Washington right now to fight this crisis instead of fueling it through unlawful immigration policies. Now we need to do our part. We need to urge the U.S. House to pass the HALT Fentanyl Act and get it to the President's desk as soon as possible.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues in talking about the fentanyl crisis that Joe Biden created in our country.

Joe Biden had 4 years of open border policies. Millions of people crossed illegally into our country. But on top of that, we saw a surge of fentanyl coming into our country—fentanyl that is killing our young people.

My colleague from Florida just referenced 70,000 people dying from fentanyl. Fentanyl is the leading cause of death among our young people age 18 to 45.

That fentanyl starts in communist China, where the precursors are made. It then gets shipped to Mexico. The cartels turn it into that final product and bring it across the border.

And we saw the impact in Nebraska. In 2019, law enforcement in Nebraska took 46 pills—just 46 pills—laced with fentanyl off of our streets. But after Joe Biden got elected, in just the first 6 months of 2021, that number jumped to 151,000 pills.

And it wasn't just the numbers; it was the human cost.

Taryn Lee Griffith is a young mom with two children. She took a pill she thought was Percocet, but it was laced with fentanyl. She died that night. Now her children are going to have to learn about their mom from stories, from pictures because they don't have their mom anymore.

Sadly, that story is being told all across this country because of the fentanyl crisis that we have. President Trump was elected to stop this crisis. I mean, think about it. If we had had 70,000 Americans killed in a terrorist attack, we would be up in arms. It is more than are dying from car accidents or heart disease in that age bracket, and yet Joe Biden did nothing.

And President Trump got elected to stop it, to make a difference, to end this catastrophe. One of the ways he is doing that is by putting tariffs on the countries that are allowing this to ship through their countries, across their borders.

I already mentioned how communist China and Mexico are linked to this. There was a daily podcast from the New York Times that talked about how President Trump's policies are really having an impact on Mexico.

Some people have said: Wait. Using tariffs, that is creating a trade war.

That is absolutely not the case. The case is this is a drug war, and the President is using the tool of tariffs to get a handle on it, to shut off the flow of fentanyl.

In just 1 month under Joe Biden, law enforcement intercepted 1,400 pounds of fentanyl coming into our country—1 month. That is enough to kill 300 million Americans. President Trump is using his powers to bring that to an end.

Now, some people have said: Well, that is fine. We get it, Mexico. But what about Canada? Canada is not the problem here.

But our northern border is also exposed. When Canada released or eased up on some of its visa restrictions, the cartels saw their advantage and started moving operations to Canada to transport both people illegally across the border and fentanyl.

In fact, 60 Minutes just did a story where they talked to one of these cartel drug smugglers about what he was doing, and he said that—this one smuggler—he was responsible for moving 30 kilograms of fentanyl across the border from Canada into the United States every month. That is enough to kill 15 million Americans, and he was doing it every month—and that was one smuggler.

Now he also said that, lately, it had been quiet. They hadn't been moving as

much fentanyl. And, again, that gets back to President Trump taking a stand to get our neighboring countries to start enforcing their border, to put more resources there, and to start blocking this fentanyl before it gets into our country.

These policies are having an impact. They are working. We need Canada and Mexico to continue to do more. President Trump is using his powers to be able to help stop that flow of fentanyl.

We are here standing up for secure borders, standing up for American families, standing up for those families who have lost loved ones already to this terrible scourge. We cannot afford to return to an open borders policy. We have to have secure borders. The stakes are too high. Too many lives have already been lost.

President Trump is leading the fight to secure our borders and stop the flow of this horrible drug into our country, and I am proud to support him in doing that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, the fentanyl epidemic has touched nearly every American. Whether it is a family member, a friend, a neighbor, a co-worker—we all know someone whose life has been affected by the tragic reality of this crisis. It is widespread, it is devastating, and it can't be ignored. For too long, this crisis has been fueled by the chaos at our southern border, and now it is happening at our northern border.

Today, I rise to honor the American lives lost to our country's horrific fentanyl epidemic, and I call on our Canadian allies to shut down these operations before more devastation occurs.

For many Americans, it started with a prescription. For others, it was a single accidental exposure. But for too many, it ended the same way: with a loss of life and the eternal grief that comes from losing a loved one.

And the harsh reality is fentanyl is the leading cause of death for Americans age 18 to 45—not cancer, not car accidents, fentanyl. Last year alone, as my colleagues have shared with you, more than 70,000 Americans died from a fentanyl overdose, and, unsurprisingly, the Biden administration failed to act. Instead, President Biden willingly chose to let the situation get worse.

For years, our southern border has been a major entry point for illegal drugs to pour into our country. But under President Trump's leadership, illegal crossings at the southern border have now dropped 94 percent. That is real progress.

Now, however, we are seeing a dangerous shift. Drug cartels have found a new route and a new loophole to continue trafficking drugs into our communities, and it is through the northern border with Canada.

Just last year, Customs and Border Patrol seized enough fentanyl at the northern border to kill 9.5 million

Americans. That is nothing short of alarming.

In fact, a member of the Sinaloa Cartel, one of Mexico's largest and most well-known operations, they openly claim, they openly brag—and I quote you this:

Canada's border is much larger than Mexico's. There are more entry points through Canada than through Mexico—a lot more entry points. So that won't stop us.

And when asked about the impact of fentanyl killing countless Americans, here is what he said:

Unfortunately, here, for money, we do anything. It's a business.

"It's a business."

Friends, killing America is not a business. We should not be endorsing known criminal activity with inaction. This is nothing short of a serious threat to our national security.

When I talk to sheriffs in all 100 counties in North Carolina, I repeatedly hear the same message: Every single county in North Carolina is a border county.

The U.S.-Canada border is the world's longest international border at more than 5,500 miles long, but it remains extraordinarily vulnerable as criminal cartel networks continue to take advantage of the gaps of our porous northern border.

I think it is important to know that 87 percent of all Terror Watchlist suspects that were encountered at land border ports last year came across our northern border.

We have invested heavily in our southern border and rightfully so. We have done that, and we should continue to do so at our southern border. But the northern border has been overlooked and underresourced for way too long.

Our law enforcement officers are doing everything they can. But without enough resources, they are being set up to fail, and that is not fair to them. We are just watching history repeat itself, and if we don't act to provide our law enforcement officials with the proper tools and technology that they need to defend our northern border, we are going to allow this to get even worse.

What is even more disturbing is that Mexican cartels are now setting up fentanyl labs in Canada and expanding their role in the global drug trade.

Now, as our ally, we need Canada to step up before more lives are lost, because the truth is that behind every statistic—behind every statistic—is a grieving family, and the American people deserve more than just empty words. They deserve real action.

The fentanyl crisis will only continue to strangle our country until we deal with the threat at our northern border like the emergency that it truly is.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues in calling

attention to the devastating fentanyl fallout, made significantly worse by 4 years of failed Democrat open border policies and to note the return of commonsense border security policies led by Senate Republicans and President Trump.

In March, Border Patrol agents encountered just 7,181 illegal immigrants attempting to cross the border—the southern border, 7,181. This is in stark contrast compared to just 1 year ago, when, under President Biden, the total encounters for the month of March totaled 137,473. That represents a 95-percent decrease in crossings, from over 137,000 to about 7,000.

This sharp drop of illegal encounters is thanks to a new administration and a new Republican majority in the House and Senate, which has prioritized securing our border by resuming policies that brought historically low encounters just 4 years ago. And, I mean, policies that we put in place 4 years ago that worked then, we have put them back in place. They are working now.

So all that discussion on the part of the Biden administration saying, oh, my gosh, they needed some new law somehow, just isn't so; is it? The numbers make that abundantly clear.

And, of course, that means reinstating the migrant protection protocols, or the "Remain in Mexico" policy. Again, commonsense policies. Reinstating these policies helped curb illegal entries of individuals at our border and has begun the process of making our country safe again.

But the work is not done. While taking advantage of the failed border policies of the prior administration, cartels and other transnational criminal organizations, or TCOs, flooded the border and gained a criminal foothold in our country. The presence of the cartels and other bad actors operating within our borders led to criminal acts like drug trafficking, human smuggling, and other illegal activities.

On his first day in office, President Trump signed a series of Executive orders addressing the border crisis that had been affecting our country and began the process of removing criminals who had illegally entered under the previous administration.

These Executive actions have served as the first steps in reversing the catch-and-release policies that allowed members of cartels, gangs, and violent transnational criminal organizations, like MS-13 and Tren de Aragua, to remain in the United States while operating criminal enterprises.

By declaring an emergency at the border, DHS, DOD, and DOJ were able to take a whole-of-government approach and begin working together to identify the criminals that were illegally operating these networks within our country.

The result of these harmful Democrat open border policies has been felt by us all and has turned every State into a border State.

Leadership for the DEA Omaha Division, which includes my State, said it plainly and simply—the repeated presence of fentanyl in our communities is due to outside forces.

The precursor chemicals are coming from China. They go down to Mexico and from there, they're pushed up into our communities.

The numbers reflect this. In 2023, officials in North Dakota seized 21,000 more fentanyl pills than the year before, 30 pounds more meth, and 2½ times more pounds of cocaine.

Last month, the Republican majorities in both Chambers, the House and the Senate, voted to continue funding for key programs at DHS and DOJ that combat the rise in illicit drugs like fentanyl. Unfortunately, our colleagues across the aisle voted against that effort.

While the United States stands prepared to take on the scourge of fentanyl that is impacting our citizens, other countries must step up as well.

As a result of the actions taken by this administration, both Canada and Mexico have begun to be engaged partners on this issue.

In February, the President of Mexico agreed to send 10,000 National Guard troops to help secure its northern border with the United States.

The Canadian Government has named a fentanyl czar, listed Mexican cartels as "terrorist groups," and launched a Canada-U.S. joint strike force to combat organized crime, fentanyl, and money laundering. Additionally, the Canadian Government increased its law enforcement presence at the border, with a 56-percent increase in border personnel at land borders and ports of entry.

CBP officers, Border Patrol agents, and State, local, and Tribal law enforcement are stepping up to take on the fentanyl crisis at our borders.

I urge our Democrat colleagues in a bipartisan way to join us and support the effort to continue securing our border and to go after the criminals that have illegally entered our country and continue to do harm.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator WYDEN and I both be able to complete our remarks before the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I do appreciate so much my colleagues coming to the floor just to be able to talk about the scourge of fentanyl and what it is really doing in our communities. Senator RICKETTS, Senator MOODY, Senator BUDD, and Senator HOEVEN spent a lot of time laying out the challenges we really face.

I think most Americans know it and have seen it, and they just don't realize how fast it is really moving. Ten years ago, we had 700 deaths in the country due to fentanyl. Last year, we had

87,000. That is the acceleration we have seen in a decade.

A vast majority of fentanyl used to come across the border from, quite frankly, China. It was being mailed in. Active work was done to be able to shut that down. It started to come through Mexico—that is progressively. We are taking that on. The cartels and the criminal organizations are shifting more and more to Canada to be able to find ways to be able to move it in. The Canadians have seen that and they have noted that as well by the aggressive actions they have taken.

Just to give you a quick glance at this, dealing with just the fentanyl issue, in 2020, the Canadians interdicted 1,000 pounds of fentanyl precursors; in 2021, it was 11,000 pounds. That is the acceleration that is also happening for these criminal organizations that are trying to be able to move fentanyl into our country and, quite frankly, into Canada as well.

So we are grateful for their partnership, but we definitely see this as an emergency. A decade ago, the United States did not move fast enough to be able to stop the movement of fentanyl into our country. We lost tens of thousands of Americans. President Trump is determined, and, quite frankly, this Congress is determined. We are not going to be asleep on that again. We will take it very, very seriously. It is a very big emergency.

So I thank my colleagues for coming here to be able to talk about it today.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 1156

Mr. President, I also want to be able to spend some time talking about an issue that we have that we also have to address. It is a totally different subject, but it is dealing with unemployment insurance that was actually done during the pandemic.

This may not seem like a big issue to some who say: That was a long time ago that we were dealing with the pandemic. Thankfully, it is more and more in our rearview mirror.

But during the pandemic, we had billions of dollars of unemployment fraud that occurred during that time period—billions. Criminal organizations saw that America was moving fast to be able to stop the unemployment problem that was in our country, obviously, during the pandemic itself. The United States quickly ramped up to be able to provide benefits, and criminal organizations ramped up just as fast to be able to go after it.

During that time period, as far as the inspector general has seen at this point, the inspector general identified \$191 billion—with a "b"—\$191 billion of unemployment insurance that was inappropriately distributed—\$191 billion.

You may say: What is the issue with that, and why are we bringing it up now?

Unemployment fraud is a criminal action. There is a 5-year statute of limitations on that. The first of the unemployment benefits were actually put out 5 years ago this week. That means