

TESTIMONY OF DEREK S. MALTZ
IN FRONT OF THE
133rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO ON
MAY 30, 2019.
“DESIGNATE MEXICAN DRUG CARTELS AS
FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS”

INTRODUCTION:

Distinguished members of the Ohio House Criminal Justice Committee, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today regarding the unprecedented drug crisis in America and designating the Mexican drug cartels as foreign terrorist organizations. I had a long rewarding 28-year career as a Special Agent in the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). I retired from the DEA in July 2014 but remain actively involved in the private sector supporting law enforcement agencies around the world as they aggressively target Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) networks causing death and destruction in communities around the world.

During the last 10 years of my career, I was the Agent in Charge of the DEA’s Special Operations Division (SOD) in Northern Virginia. In that capacity, I ran the SOD operational coordination center with 30 participating agencies, to include representatives from Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom. SOD’s primary mission is to support and synchronize the investigative efforts of federal, state, local and international law enforcement agencies. Since the Mexican cartels are one of the biggest TOC threats to the United States, SOD focused substantial resources on the Mexican TOC organizations. SOD was instrumental in supporting the Mexican government and the U.S. agencies to capture the leader of the Sinaloa cartel, El Chapo Guzman, on two occasions and coordinating the worldwide investigations against the cartel. (CBS 60 Minutes, 2018)

Unfortunately, I watched the threat of the Mexican cartels grow over the years as they took over the importation and distribution of heroin, cocaine, methamphetamines, marijuana and now fentanyl. I remain committed to work with Congress, the General Assembly of Ohio, my friends in the government agencies and fellow citizens like Heid Riggs of Ohio to help develop recommendations and solutions to build more effective approaches to eliminate the crisis. Too many Americans are dying from drug overdoses and citizens all over Ohio are impacted by the Mexican drug cartels. Thank you, Representative Scott Wiggam and Representative Phil Plummer, for sponsoring this important bill to designate the Mexican drug cartels as terrorists’ organizations. I’m honored to be here to further discuss this important matter.

There are dangerous connections between criminal activity and terrorism around the globe and this massive threat is growing. The topic of narco-terrorism has been a priority of mine while serving at SOD. Even though it has been 18 years after the devastating terrorist act on September 11, 2001, we still have significant work to do to ensure we implement a solid “unity of effort” and use all tools of national power to combat and decimate these complex threats.

Last year, I was asked to participate in the impactful documentary “Not in Vein” by Sara Carter. I was thoroughly impressed by the outstanding work done by Ms. Carter, the Full Story Foundation Films Director Joe Weasel and his colleagues. I also was able to meet Tom Thompson, Jennie Taer, Lynda

McLaughlin, Chris Farrell, Heidi Riggs and Alfredo Ortiz at the premier showing of the film in Washington, DC last fall and saw their commitment to this battle. I was eager to participate with this great group of Americans especially after learning the sad story of 20-year-old Marin Riggs from Columbus, Ohio. As a patriotic American who lost his brother Michael, fighting for America during Operation Enduring Freedom in the U.S. Air Force, I'm familiar with the pain and suffering of losing a loved one. However, my heart goes out to the Riggs family since nothing is more difficult in life than losing a child. The "Not in Vein" experience made me even more committed to help with this tremendous problem. It was awesome to see these great people stepping up to educate the public not only in Ohio, but all over the country. I have since engaged with multiple families who lost children to this crisis as well as participated in national news media to push the important messages to the public.

On April 12, 2019, the Indiana State Police seized six kilograms of fentanyl on I-70. The poisonous substance was being transported from California and destined for Ohio. The four subjects arrested were from Los Angeles, California, a known domestic command and control hub for the Mexican cartels. The dedicated work of the State Police prevented the fentanyl from hitting the streets of Ohio. This volume of fentanyl, based on medical experts and the DEA, could have killed up to 3,000,000 residents of Ohio or more than 25% of the state's population. This should be very disturbing news for the citizens of Ohio. The country has never experienced this type of drug crisis so more needs to be done. (6 kilograms of fentanyl destined for Ohio seized in Morgan County, 2019)

OVERVIEW:

Based on the current opioid epidemic, drug crisis and the related death and destruction caused by the Mexican Cartels, I'm pleased to be here today to discuss the threats in the United States and the Mexican Transnational Crime Organization's (TCO) as their role has grown over the years in the illicit drug trade. The Mexican TCO's are a tremendous threat to public health, safety and national security. In my view based on experience, the Mexican TCO's are one of the greatest criminal threats to America.

Mexican drug cartels dominate the drug business in the United States and are operating in over 50 countries around the world and most cities in the United States. They operate like a fortune 500 company in many ways but employ devastating violence as well. They have major hubs in Southern California, Arizona, Chicago, Texas, New York and Atlanta. The cartels also expanded into South Florida as they developed a huge customer market with their high purity products that are killing Americans at an unprecedented level. The major cartels that have the most substantial impact in America are the Sinaloa, Jalisco New Generation, Gulf, Juarez, Los Zetas and the Beltran Leyva enterprise. In my view, the Sinaloa and the Jalisco New Generation cartels are currently the most influential in Mexico and have a very large operation in the U.S. Even though Chapo Guzman was convicted on all counts and will spend his life in prison, the Sinaloa and Jalisco cartels remain a huge threat and seem to be growing daily as migrants are walking across the porous border establishing cartel business in U.S. cities like Columbus, Ohio. The bad guys are taking full advantage of the antiquated laws that make no sense.

Due to the increasing threats to Ohio and states around America, on October 15, 2018, former Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced a Department of Justice (DOJ) task force that would focus on the top TOC threats to America. The Sinaloa Cartel and the Cartel Jalisco New Generation cartel were designated as two of the most significant crime threats to the United States. The Attorney General's TOC Task Force is led by the Deputy Attorney General and will be composed of experienced prosecutors and investigators. DOJ formed subcommittees for each of the target groups. The subcommittee on Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generacion will be led by Trial Attorney Brett Reynolds of the Narcotic and Dangerous

Drug Section of the Department's Criminal Division. The subcommittee on the Sinaloa Cartel will be led by Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew Sutton of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of California. (Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs, 2018)

The DOJ along with DEA, also announced on July 12, 2018, the initiation of an enforcement surge named Synthetic Opioid Surge (SOS) in 10 judicial districts with some of the highest drug overdose death rates, including the Northern and Southern Districts of Ohio. This new program seeks to reduce the supply of deadly synthetic opioids in high impact areas and to identify wholesale distribution networks and international and domestic suppliers. Based on a variety of factors, Ohio was designated as a top priority area in the United States. (DEA, 2018).

According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, (CDC), in 2017, 70,237 Americans died from drug overdoses, which is 192 per day or 1 every 11 minutes. According to the CDC experts, Opioids were involved in 47,600 overdose deaths in 2017, which is 130 Americans per day or 1 every 11 minutes. In 2017, Ohio ranked second, (46.3 per 100,000), behind West Virginia with the highest rates of death due to drug overdose. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.)

To put these disturbing statistics in perspective; If you add up all the people who died on September 11, 2001, the Afghan war and the Iraqi war, that figure only represents about 14 % of the 72,000 who died from drugs in 2017. I'm very pleased to see the 133rd General Assembly of the State of Ohio looking closely at this massive crisis to identify the root causes and comprehensive solutions to address the problem.

In a recent story on May 26, 2019 in the Columbus Dispatch, the headlines read, "**Ohio is ground zero in fight against opioid abuse...**" The article went on to say, "Fayette County, 40 miles southwest of Columbus, has the seventh-highest number of fentanyl overdose deaths per capita in the nation, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention analyzed by the Washington Post." "Though the Trump administration has made the opioid epidemic a priority, **people in communities across the country continue to die in record numbers from fentanyl.**" Former Drug Czar John Walters stated, "We're spending much more money on terrorism, as we should, but we're not spending a similar amount on the source of death to many more Americans right now." This statistic is very alarming for all the good people of Ohio. "In 2015, there were 1,255 deaths related to synthetic opioids, most from fentanyl. By the end of 2017, that number had nearly tripled to 3,572" Senator Rob Portman, R-Ohio, said "In Ohio, **fentanyl is ravaging parts of the state and overwhelming the system,**". (Ohio is ground zero in fight against opioid abuse, but is Trump administration focused enough on problem?, 2019)

Highest annual rate of synthetic opioid deaths	
Cabell County, W.Va.	62.9
Baltimore City, Md.	40.8
Montgomery County, Ohio	36.3
Berkeley County, W.Va.	31.1
Harrison County, Ky.	30.0
Clark County, Ohio	28.6
Fayette County, Ohio	28.5
St. Louis City, Mo.	26.2
Butler County, Ohio	25.7
Hamilton County, Ohio	24.8

Note: Death rates are a per-year average, per 100,000 people from 2013-2017 • Source: Washington Post analysis of CDC data

The CDC data obtained by The Post documents for the first time the 10 places with the highest per capita fentanyl-related overdose death rates: five counties in Ohio, two in West Virginia and one in Kentucky and the cities of Baltimore and St. Louis. Local health officials told The Post they are still not receiving enough federal money to fund drug treatment programs to wean people off highly addictive opioids or launch prevention programs to warn people of the dangers of fentanyl.

In Cabell County, W.Va., the county with the highest fentanyl overdose death rate in the nation, there are long waiting lists for treatment.

(FIGHTING FENTANYL, 2019)

From the recent Washington Post article, you can see the volume of synthetic opioid deaths in Ohio. Five counties in Ohio are in the top 10 for the highest per capita fentanyl related overdose deaths.

There are other national security risks associated with the potent opioid mixtures coming from Mexico and across the border via airplane and drones. There are serious impediments in the current laws, which are crippling law enforcement’s ability to target the complex organizations using the most sophisticated technology.

Keep in mind, there were over 29,000 murders in Mexico in 2017 and over 33,000 in 2018. This is a record level for the country, and we have seen serious violence in America as well. There are disappearances at record numbers in Mexico as the ruthless cartels employ criminals like the “Stew Maker”. (Ley, 2017). Based on the unprecedented violence, deaths to Americans and criminal activities, a sound case can be made to designate the Mexican cartels as foreign terrorist organizations pursuant to the U.S Department of State criteria. The Mexican cartels have left a trail of blood using intimidation and terrorist acts of ruthless violence. The cartels engage in beheadings, car bombings, dissolving humans in acid, mass murders, torture, bombings and political assassinations. Their actions are consistent with the behaviors of traditional terrorists and they have infiltrated the highest levels of the Mexican government with bribes and corruption. Despite these trends, people refer to the Mexican cartels as only transnational organized criminals even though they operate like terrorists and wreak havoc all over their country, United States and Canada.

The Secretary of State designates Foreign Terrorist Organizations in accordance with section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act. The legal criteria for designating a group as a Foreign Terrorist Organization are:

- It must be a foreign organization.
- The organization must engage in terrorist activity, as defined in section 212 (a)(3)(B) of the INA (8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(3)(B)),* or terrorism, as defined in section 140(d)(2) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1988 and 1989 (22 U.S.C. § 2656f(d)(2)),** or retain the capability and intent to engage in terrorist activity or terrorism.
- The organization’s terrorist activity or terrorism must threaten the security of U.S. nationals or the national security (national defense, foreign relations, or the economic interests) of the United States. (Foreign Terrorist Organizations, n.d.)

For the United States to properly deal with one of America's greatest national security threats, it's time to stop debating and procrastinating, and designate the violent cartels as terrorists. In this country we need to put the politics aside and look at the volume of deaths alone. For the members of this General Assembly of Ohio, look at all the citizens from Ohio who have died from this crisis and the destruction of so many great American families

By approving the State Department designation, the U.S. agencies can obtain the necessary tools, resources and options required to not only reduce the level of violence but to ultimately dismantle the Mexican drug cartels. The cartels have waged war on society and their Mexican criminal justice system has failed for years despite all the training and resources provided by the United States. It's time to adjust the strategies to deal with this alarming threat as the death and destruction has been astonishing. The United States must shut down the financial infrastructure of these groups as well as destroy the production laboratories. Look at the huge quantities of methamphetamines being produced in industrial laboratories in Mexico and dumped in counties all over Ohio.

Despite the deployment of various strategies by the administrations of the Mexican government, such as the utilization of the Mexican military and the implementation of community oriented socio-economic and cultural programs, violence is on the rise in a country controlled by Mexican drug cartels. Mexico has experienced record numbers of murders passing 33,000 in 2018. (MEIXLER, 2019) Despite the catastrophic death toll in Mexico, homicide data is inaccurate due to the Mexican governments' misrepresentation of statistical data for the sake of not discouraging tourism in a struggling economy. The statistical data in Mexico is misleading since it does not account for the tens of thousands of people in Mexico that are currently missing and are presumed to be dead.

The cartels routinely conduct beheadings, in which corpses and heads are hung on public display. They are known for kidnapping, torturing and dismembering their targets. They conduct killings of innocent people and cartel rivals for satanic sacrifices. Innocent women and children are not impervious to cartel violence, as they kill have killed indiscriminately to scare the general population into submission and subservience.

Similar to terrorists' organizations like ISIL and Al Qaeda, Mexican drug cartels also utilize social media sites to install fear into the general public by posting videos, and photographs of individuals being decapitated and tortured. (Hastings, 2013) They have also routinely killed politicians who oppose cartel violence or who publicly announced their dissent.

The United States Government currently mistakenly views the Mexican drug cartels as only TOC organizations and its current strategy and policies are insufficient to end the Mexican drug cartels chaos and deaths to Americans. Look at the massive amounts of overdoses and addiction to cocaine, methamphetamines and heroin by our citizens. The production is on the rise and the supply of these poisonous drugs are vast. The United States must accept and come to the realization that the cartels are terrorist organizations. The government leaders must also understand the culture and mindset of the cartels.

The Mexican drug cartel ideology is influenced by their culture and religious beliefs which provide moral justification for their actions. Some Mexican drug cartels have utilized techniques which focus on mind manipulation and behavioral modification commonly utilized by organizations such as Al-Qaeda. As an example, The La Familia Cartel's indoctrination process is described as a 6-8-week program which

incorporates texts and videos to assist with brainwashing, periodic vows of silence and days without talking to enhance spiritual concentration, solidarity and loyalty to the Cartels leadership.

Another aspect of indoctrination utilized by the Mexican drug cartels, consist of enlisting young recruits into training camps where they are under the guidance and tutelage of hit men or “Sicario’s”. Child soldiers are desensitized through vigorous training in which recruits are taught and ordered to kill and dismember their victim, while conduct kidnappings, assassinations and carry out car bombings. The operatives are taught how to utilize and operate both basic and advanced weapon systems and devices such as assault weapons, pistols and at times even explosives. Upon the completion of training, recruits are sent on domestic and international missions to establish cells of Sicario’s where they are subsequently called upon to carry out acts of violence on behalf of the cartels. (MOST, 2015)

The Mexican cartels are not typical crime groups as they conduct acts of terrorism not solely in furtherance of drug trafficking but for the purpose of instilling fear in the public and influencing the policy of government. They are responsible for utilizing terror tactics to silence, torture and kill civilians, government officials and advocacy groups such as Catholic priests, who publicly speak out against the violence inflicted by the Mexican drug cartels. The Mexican cartels have become Mexico’s insurgency’s and have utilized terror tactics. They have corrupted and radicalized religion to undermine the Mexican government and the rule of law. The Mexican drug cartels have recruited hundreds of trained law enforcement and military personnel who now carry out executions and assassinations on behalf of the cartels. Paramilitary organizations such as the Los Zetas Cartel, who were previously trained by the U.S. military and have become one the most feared and violent terrorist organizations society has ever seen.

The cartels are fearless and operate with a sense of impunity. For example, in May 2015, the Jalisco Nuevo Generacion cartel (CJNG), blocked more than 30 roads with smoldering tankers, set ATMs and banks on fire then proceeded to shoot down a military helicopter with a rocket propelled grenade (RPG); killing several Mexican military soldiers. (Córdoba, 2015)

The Mexican drug cartels understand that in order to maintain control over the country of Mexico they must have a strong influence over the government, civilians, culture and the Catholic Church since it is the most commonly practiced religion in Mexico. Mexican journalists have been victimized and targeted by cartels for reporting information regarding their criminal activities. Mexican drug cartels like to publicize their violence with public hangings and social media videos depicting executions and decapitations, they like to do so at their own discretion and not at the discretion of professional journalists. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Special Agent’s Jaime Zapata and Victor Avila were traveling in a bullet proof vehicle containing Diplomatic license plates on Highway 57 in San Luis Potosi, MX, when a group of armed men from the Los Zetas Cartel forced their vehicle to the side of the road. After identifying themselves as U.S. Diplomats and refusing to exit the vehicle, the group of armed men forcibly opened the vehicle door and opened fire into the vehicle killing SA Zapata and wounding SA Avila. (Hsu, 2017)

The Mexican drug cartels have proven that they will kill discriminately and indiscriminately in order to expand and their influence throughout the country. In May of 2011, representatives from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) declined a proposal by several U.S. Congressmen including U.S. Rep Michael McCaul, to classify several Mexican drug cartels as terrorist organizations. (McCaul Seeks to Classify Mexican Drug Cartels as Terrorists, 2011)

They stated the mechanisms and laws already in place in the U.S. to deal with drug trafficking are enough and the proposed terrorist classification would be unnecessary. The U.S. and Mexico efforts and strategy against the Mexican drug cartels have been proven to be ineffective in its ability to curtail and significantly reduce the level of drug trafficking and violence inflicted by the cartels. Look at the statistics alone. The purpose of reclassifying Mexican drug cartels as terrorist organizations is to not only address the problem of drug trafficking, but to ultimately confront the level violence and terror carried out by the cartels. Designating Mexican drug cartels as terrorist organization will subsequently cause an increased amount of public exposure into the acts of terrorism inflicted by the drug cartels.

It will also provide the U.S. government with additional options when combating the Mexican drug cartels that are not limited to the capabilities of law enforcement. Instead it will bridge the gap between the law enforcement, Military and intelligence community, thus providing more resources and capabilities to combat the Mexican drug cartels. The cartels utilize and have been found to be in possession of weapons such as assault rifles, pistols, grenades, RPG rocket launchers, claymore anti-personnel mines and man portable air defense systems (MANPADS). (Bunker, 2016)

The Mexican cartels have taken control of Mexico through active means of terrorism. They have consistently killed Mexico mayors who have opposed the illegal activities and violence inflicted by the cartels. They have corrupted thousands of government officials, police officers and military personal through financial means or through intimidation by means of death to them and their loved ones. They have also posed a threat to Mexico's oil infrastructure. Siphoning incidents on pipeline networks have become the norm and drug cartels have continuously threatened to kidnap and extort employees involved in oil operations. (Woody, 2018)

HEZBOLLAH AND GLOBAL DRUG TRAFFICKING WITH MEXICAN CARTELS:

During "Project Cassandra", SOD's focused attack on major drug cartels and Hezbollah's role in a very large-scale terror finance operation. Hezbollah was identified as a top threat by the DOJ led inter-agency group pursuant to the President's TOC strategy. SOD's Counter Narco Terrorism Operations Center (CNTOC), initiated a project with multiple agencies to investigate the connectivity between Hezbollah and the drug cartels.

As the Director of SOD for several years, I witnessed unprecedented results as the CNTOC Task Force and exposed elements of the terrorist group Hezbollah, who were being funded by worldwide cocaine sales. During 2008, the U.S. cooperative investigation with Colombia culminated with over 130 arrests, to include many of the senior-level operatives, and \$23 million was seized. (ROTELL, 2008) This case identified the scope and the alliance between South American drug traffickers to money laundering operations in Hong Kong, Central America, Mexico, Africa and Canada, and a connection to several Lebanese criminals associated with a global organized crime network.

Based on the substantial information developed during this phase of Cassandra and very alarming and emerging trends exposed, CNTOC with representatives from numerous agencies, spearheaded a focused investigation with the field offices on the Middle Eastern money launderers working with the drug traffickers who were shipping multi-ton quantities of cocaine into West Africa for distribution around the world. During this initiative, DEA identified the leader of this sophisticated network who coordinated multi-ton shipments of cocaine from Colombia to Los Zeta's Mexican drug cartel and was laundering hundreds of millions of dollars in drug proceeds back to Colombia. The main operative also established a very sophisticated network in West Africa to move currency via couriers back to Lebanon.

In February 2011, The Department of Treasury with DEA announced the identification of the Lebanese Canadian Bank (LCB) as a financial institution of primary money-laundering concern under section 311 of the USA Patriot Act. This was the first time ever the 311 Action was used in a drug case. The organized crime network was moving large shipments of drugs from South America, Central America and Mexico to Europe and the Middle East via West Africa and laundering hundreds of millions of dollars to accounts held at LCB as well as through trade base money-laundering involving consumer goods throughout the world, including used car dealerships in the U.S. LCB was helping Hezbollah through the Joumaa network. (US Treasury, 2011)

Subsequently in December 2011, there was a complaint filed in the Southern District of New York exposing this Lebanese money-laundering scheme which investigators documented over \$300 million into United States for the purchase and shipment of used cars to West Africa. The complaint alleged that the assets of LCB, Hassan Ayash Exchange and Elissa Holding, along with the assets of approximately 30 U.S. car buyers and a U.S. shipping company and related entities that facilitate the scheme, are forfeitable as the proceeds of violations of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA).

Through this investigation, the task force of agencies exposed the LCB as money-laundering for Hezbollah through a very aggressive financial attack against the network. The federal complaint was seeking penalties totaling \$483 million. During the December 2011, the Eastern District of Virginia announced the indictment of Ayman Joumaa for coordinating the shipment of tens of thousands of kilograms of cocaine from Colombia to Los Zetas Drug Cartel for distribution into the United States over an eight-year period. Joumaa was also charged with laundering millions of dollars in drug proceeds for the organization. It was estimated that the terror scheme was moving \$200 million per month. Joumaa's organization was further exposed through the OFAC sanction. (U.S. Charges Alleged Lebanese Drug Kingpin with Laundering Drug Proceeds for Mexican and Colombian Drug Cartels, 2011)

In August 2012, the Southern District of New York (SDNY) filed a 981K action against five corresponding banks in the United States that were doing business with Banque Labano Francais. This Lebanese bank received \$150 million from the Lebanese Canadian bank after they were exposed with their international money-laundering business. As a result of this very successful 981K action, the United States settled a civil forfeiture action against the Lebanese Canadian bank and the settlement required LCB to forfeit \$102 million to the United States. This was an unprecedented action targeting Hezbollah and their worldwide illicit activities. The settlement also identified to the world that international moneylaunderers for terrorists and narco-traffickers will face serious consequences even when the activity is outside the US (Justice, 2012) (York, 2013) (Manhattan U.S. Attorney Announces \$102 Million Settlement Of Civil Forfeiture And Money Laundering Claims Against Lebanese Canadian Bank, 2013)

During February 2016, DEA working with European law enforcement identified a massive Hezbollah drug and money-laundering scheme. This complex investigation targeted Hezbollah's Lebanese Hezbollah's Business Affairs Component (LHBAC). This component has been engaged in weapons purchases for Hezbollah to support its activities in Syria. This investigation involved multiple countries and showed once again the connection between Hezbollah and drug trafficking. This aspect focused on LHBAC. The LHBAC formed a business relationship with the South American cocaine traffickers responsible for shipping multi-tons of cocaine around the world. The massive proceeds made by this element provides proceeds for the purchase of weapons needed for their international terrorist operations. (DEA And European Authorities Uncover Massive Hizballah Drug And Money Laundering Scheme, 2016)

CONCLUSION:

Mexican cartels currently operate throughout the U.S. and are the primary cause for the heroin/fentanyl and methamphetamine crisis we are combating today. The state of Ohio is inundated with crime, drugs and violence fueled by the Mexican drug cartels. The cartels are taking advantage of the massive addiction and demand for opioids and methamphetamines in Ohio and all over the United States. They have also managed to maintain cells of Sicario's, which are operating in U.S. cities while conducting kidnappings and executions on behalf of the cartels.

Terrorists will continue to tap into the incredible amounts of money generated from drug trafficking and many other criminal activities such as human trafficking, counterfeiting, weapons sales and sex trafficking so it's imperative that our hard-working personnel on the terror and criminal sides come together. The United States will not be effective if they don't eliminate the information sharing walls. We need the leadership of the Attorney General, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and our important Executives from the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Intelligence Community (IC) to unite and direct people what is expected. We also need to work closely with our state and local counterparts that are under resourced and must deal with this crisis on the front lines. To have the State of Ohio General Assembly taking leadership on this national problem is tremendous.

The threats to this great country are moving at lightning speed and we need a sense of urgency at this point. Chinese organized crime and the Mexican cartels have formed a bond that's growing daily. In the recent testimony of DEA's Chief of Operations Greg Cherundelo, it's clear that fentanyl has emerged as a tremendous threat to America with the influence of the Chinese and cartels.

“Under U.S. federal law, fentanyl is a Schedule II controlled substance, which is lawfully produced and distributed in the United States by manufacturers of prescription drugs approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and is widely used in medicine. It is an extremely potent analgesic, used for anesthesia and for pain control in people with serious pain problems; in such pain control cases, it is generally indicated only for use in people who have a high opioid tolerance. Illicit fentanyl, fentanyl-related substances, and their immediate precursors are often produced in China. From China, these substances are shipped primarily through express consignment carriers or international mail directly to the

United States, or, alternatively, to TCOs in Mexico, Canada, and the Caribbean. Once in the Western Hemisphere, fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances are prepared for mixing into the heroin supply, other non-opioid drugs, or pressed into a tablet form, and then moved into the illicit U.S. market, where demand for prescription opioids and heroin remain at epidemic proportions. In some instances, drug trafficking organizations have industrial pill presses shipped directly into the United States from China, which allows them to press fentanyl pills domestically. Mexican TCOs have seized upon this business opportunity because of the profit potential of synthetic opioids and have invested in growing their share of this market. Because of its low dosage range and potency, one kilogram of fentanyl purchased in China for \$3,000 - \$5,000 can generate upwards of \$1.5 million in revenue on the illicit market. Such is the potency of fentanyl, that consumption of as little as 2 milligrams of fentanyl can result in a fatal overdose, meaning that a kilogram of fentanyl has the potential of causing lethal overdoses of 500,000 people.” (UNPRECEDENTED MIGRATION AT THE U.S. SOUTHERN BORDER:, 2019)

It's evident that the TOC groups like the Mexican cartels are using the state-of-the-art technology, moving extremely fast while our investigators and assets are getting "stuck in the mud" of politics, bureaucracy and antiquated laws. In my view fentanyl is a chemical weapon and the narco-terrorist Mexican cartels are destroying our country. We need to step up the game with a sense of urgency.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on these important topics impacting our national security and public safety.

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