

U.S. Rep. Sensenbrenner: Introduces bill to save lives and curb the opioid epidemic

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Washington, D.C.—Today, Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner (WI-05), introduced the Stopping Overdoses of Fentanyl Analogues (SOFA) Act that will save lives by fighting the spread of fentanyl analogues. Specifically, the bill adds nineteen identified fentanyl analogues to the Schedule I drug list and provides the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) with the tools needed to quickly add other analogues as they are identified.

Sensenbrenner: “With the opioid crisis tearing apart families across Wisconsin and the U.S., we must ramp up efforts to stop the proliferation of these drugs. This important legislation closes the loophole that allows these deadly drugs to continue pouring into our neighborhoods. It also provides law enforcement with the necessary tools to more effectively identify and schedule new fentanyl analogues. As Co-chair of the Congressional Addiction, Treatment, and Recovery Caucus, I will continue working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to end this epidemic.”

Background on the SOFA Act:

Fentanyl is currently classified as a Schedule II controlled substance used to treat cancer patients. However, it is dangerous and can be lethal outside of the careful supervision of a doctor. Fentanyl abuse is one of the leading contributors to the opioid epidemic.

A new chemical compound, known as an analogue, is created by modifying one small piece of the chemical structure of fentanyl. These compounds fall into a legal loophole and contribute to the alarming rate of opioid-related deaths in the U.S. In fact, data from the Center for Disease Control (see below) indicates that synthetic opioids, which includes fentanyl and its analogues, are the leading cause of drug overdoses.

Analogue producers are likely to continue developing new variations, and law enforcement agencies must have the tools to adapt to these changes. Under current law, DEA scheduling practices are reactive in nature. Typically, fentanyl analogues are only scheduled after they have resulted in deaths across multiples states.

The SOFA Act closes the legal loophole by adding nineteen known fentanyl analogues to the Schedule I list. It also gives the DEA the authority to immediately schedule new fentanyl analogues as they are discovered, making enforcement and scheduling procedures more proactive.

The bill shares the acronym of an organization started by Oconomowoc, WI resident Lauri Badura, who lost her son Archie to an overdose in 2014. Shortly after, she founded the faith-based non-profit Saving Others for Archie, Inc. to raise awareness and fight the opioid epidemic.

Lauri recently attended President Trump's first State of the Union address as the guest of Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI), who has introduced the Senate Version of SOFA.

The [full text](#) of H.R. 4922, the Stopping Overdoses of Fentanyl Analogues Act is available here.

Note: Congressman Sensenbrenner and Senator Johnson's bills differ in the number of fentanyl analogues immediately scheduled.