

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Baldwin and Bill Cassidy introduce bipartisan legislation to halt the flow of illicit Fentanyl into the U.S.

Posted on Tuesday, Apr 24, 2018

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

CONTACT: [press@baldwin.senate.gov](mailto:press@baldwin.senate.gov)  
202-224-6225

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Bill Cassidy (R-LA) of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today introduced bipartisan legislation to stop the flow of illegal opioids, fentanyl, methamphetamine and other illicit drugs into the country through International Mail Facilities. The *Restricting Entrance and Strengthening the Requirements on Import Controls for Trafficking (RESTRICT) Illicit Drugs Act* would give the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) more tools to prevent illegal fentanyl, opioids and other illicit synthetic drugs from entering the country at the border through our International Mail Facilities.

“The opioid epidemic is devastating families and communities throughout Wisconsin and a key way to help prevent this is to stop more illicit drugs like fentanyl, meth and illegal opioids from coming into this country. I’m introducing this commonsense bipartisan legislation with Senator Cassidy to strengthen our control over the flow of illicit drugs from other countries into America,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “One of my top priorities for Wisconsin right now is increasing the federal investment to help fight the opioid crisis, and making sure we are doing everything we can to help local health and law enforcement officials in Wisconsin with prevention, treatment and recovery efforts.”

“To combat the opioid epidemic, we need a ‘do everything’ response that addresses all sources of illegal drugs flooding our streets,” **said Dr. Cassidy.** “This legislation strengthens coordination between the FDA and Customs and Border Patrol to better stop illegal opioids at the point of entry.”

In 2016, 63,632 Americans died from drug overdoses and according to the CDC, the increase in overdose deaths is driven largely by deaths from synthetic opioids and illicit fentanyl. Reports show that the synthetic opioid related overdose death rate more than doubled in 2016. China is the primary source of fentanyl in the U.S. with many of these illicit drugs coming through our International Mail Facilities (IMFs). More than 340 million packages reach the U.S. every year through IMFs from more than 180 countries. However, estimates show that we are only intercepting a small percentage of the illicit drugs smuggled through IMFs.

The legislation was included as part of the bipartisan legislative package, the *Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018*, to bolster the federal response to the opioid epidemic that successfully passed out of the Senate HELP Committee today.

The *RESTRICT Illicit Drugs Act* modernizes FDA’s authority to help address importation of illegal drugs like opioids and other synthetic drugs by:

- Strengthening coordination and efficiency between FDA and CBP by clarifying CBP’s role in managing the admission, refusal or destruction process of any counterfeit drug product or package containing a controlled substance.
- Allowing FDA to debar, or stop, individuals or companies convicted of an FDA-related felony from continued shipments to prevent companies who have been caught shipping illegal substances from gaming the system and operating under a new name.
- Enhancing FDA’s authority to refuse admission of illegal drugs from entities that have been de-barred, as a result of an FDA-related felony.

Senators Baldwin and Cassidy are joined on this legislation by HELP Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Senator Bob Casey (D-PA).

Read more about the *RESTRICT Illicit Drugs Act* [here](#). The full text of the legislation is available [here](#).

An online version of this release is available [here](#).