

U.S. Rep. Fitzgerald, U.S. Sen. Johnson: Introduce SOFA act to combat opioid epidemic

Posted on Wednesday, Mar 31, 2021

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WASHINGTON, DC – Amid the continuing and growing crisis at the border, Congressman Scott Fitzgerald (R-Wis.) and U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) have introduced the Stopping Overdoses of Fentanyl Analogues (SOFA) Act to give law enforcement enhanced tools to combat the opioid epidemic and close a loophole in current law that makes it difficult to prosecute crimes involving some synthetic opioids. Sen. Johnson first introduced the SOFA Act in July 2017. In August 2018, the National Association of Attorneys General sent a letter to Senate and House leadership, expressing that the attorneys general of all 50 states, Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico support the SOFA Act and encourage its swift passage.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents and officers have seized more than 4,900 pounds of fentanyl during the first five months of fiscal year 2021, [already surpassing the total](#) for all of fiscal year 2020.

“The United States experienced record levels of drug overdose fatalities last year as the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted life as we know it. Fentanyl—which is more potent than morphine and heroin—was a major factor in thousands of these deaths. As a Wisconsin State Senator, I worked to unanimously pass fentanyl scheduling legislation, and I am proud to now introduce the SOFA Act as a Congressman alongside Senator Johnson. Too many families have lost loved ones to drug overdoses, this legislation plays a critically important role in ending the abuse of this often life-destroying substance,” **said Congressman Fitzgerald.**

“Families throughout Wisconsin and America have been devastated by the epidemic

of opioid overdoses. The SOFA Act will close a deadly loophole in current law that is being exploited by illegal drug manufacturers. The bill gives law enforcement the tools to quickly schedule fentanyl analogues as they are identified, hopefully saving lives,” **said Sen. Johnson.**

“Working exactly as planned, the temporary targeted fentanyl-class scheduling has been extremely effective in removing the incentive for the creation and trafficking of fentanyl-related substances and as a result has been saving countless lives across the country. Many Thanks to Rep. Fitzgerald for his leadership first in getting this critical scheduling language started by getting it passed unanimously in Wisconsin in 2017 when he was the WI Senate Leader, and now for authoring the federal version. As an emergency physician, parent of young adult daughters, and medical regulator, I strongly encourage Congress to act now to pass SOFA into law and make this critical reform permanent,” **said Timothy Westlake, MD, FFSMB, FACEP Wisconsin Medical Examining Board, Immediate-Past Chairman Wisconsin Controlled Substance Board, former Member Governor Walker’s Task Force on Opioid Abuse.**

SOFA (Saving Others for Archie) is also a Wisconsin organization dedicated to raising awareness about the dangers of drug addiction. It was started by Lauri Badura after her son Archie died from a drug overdose in 2014.

Text of the legislation can be found [here](#).

Background on the SOFA Act:

- The SOFA Act would:
 - Close a loophole in current law by immediately scheduling particular fentanyl analogues known in our communities under Schedule I
 - Provide the Drug Enforcement Agency additional tools to quickly schedule other dangerous fentanyl analogues as they are identified
- SOFA stands for Stopping Overdoses of Fentanyl Analogues and is the same acronym as an organization started by Lauri Badura of Oconomowoc, Wis. Lauri lost her son, Archie, to an overdose on May 15, 2014 and has worked to raise awareness throughout Wisconsin on the dangers of drug addiction