

# U.S. Rep. Fitzgerald, U.S. Sen. Johnson: Introduce SOFA Act to fight opioid epidemic

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**WASHINGTON, DC** – Today, Congressman Scott Fitzgerald and Wisconsin Senator Ron Johnson introduced the *Stopping Overdoses of Fentanyl Analogues* (SOFA) Act to combat the opioid epidemic and surge in overdose deaths occurring across the country.

**Background:** Drug overdoses in the United States hit record levels in 2021, with more than 106,000 fatalities, according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). Fentanyl, which is up to 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more than heroin, was a factor in more than 75% of these deaths.

Synthetic versions of fentanyl, referred to as fentanyl analogues, are often produced in China, then shipped to Mexico where cartels use it to manufacture large amounts of fentanyl products to be smuggled into the United States. Right now, these substances have only been classified as Schedule I, carrying the most severe criminal penalties, on an emergency basis.

**Summary:** The Biden administration, despite supporting reclassification, is unwilling to act unless Congress reforms mandatory minimum policies to reduce criminal sentences and allow dangerous individuals back on to our streets. This bill would invoke permanent scheduling classification of fentanyl-related substances as Schedule I.

SOFA is the same acronym as an organization started by Lauri Badura of Oconomowoc, WI, *Saving Others for Archie*. Lauri has worked to raise awareness on the dangers of drug addiction throughout Wisconsin following the loss of her son,

Archie, to an overdose on May 15, 2014.

*“Fentanyl is more potent than morphine and heroin and the leading cause of overdose deaths in 2021, **said Congressman Scott Fitzgerald.** While in the Wisconsin State Senate, I worked to unanimously pass fentanyl schedule legislation, and have been working alongside Senator Johnson to do the same at the federal level, since coming to Congress. Too many families are losing loved ones to drug overdoses fueled by fentanyl. This legislation is critical to ending the abuse of this powerful and dangerous substance.”*

*“Passing the SOFA Act is more important than ever as Americans face the worst border crisis in our nation’s history. This bill codifies an effective regulation that is preventing new fentanyl-related substances from entering our communities, **said Senator Ron Johnson.** Wisconsin families and American communities have been devastated by the opioid epidemic. I’m proud to work with Congressman Fitzgerald to re-introduce this lifesaving and common-sense legislation for the fourth time.”*