



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

The Forum for America's Ideas

November 29, 2017

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The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
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The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Speaker Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Synthetics Trafficking and Overdose Prevention Act

Dear Senator McConnell, Senator Schumer, Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the bipartisan organization representing the legislatures of our nation's states, commonwealths and territories, we write to express our support for the Synthetics Trafficking and Overdose Prevention Act ("STOP Act"). The STOP Act (H.R. 1057 and S. 372) would require advance electronic data screening of all inbound shipments to the United States to facilitate identification and interception of illegal substances and other dangerous, counterfeit and patent-infringing goods.

The United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has implemented advance electronic manifesting and security screening as a key tool for identifying and intercepting high-risk shipments that may include illegal or dangerous goods such as synthetic drugs. Pursuant to the Trade Act of 2002, private shipping and logistics companies are legally required to provide this important electronic data to CBP before packages arrive in the US. This provision, however, exempts the United States Postal Service, (USPS), which delivers over 400 million packages brought into the United States from the posts of foreign countries each year. The vast majority of packages coming into the United States, including nearly 300 million each year from China, the leading source of synthetic opioids and counterfeit goods, enters our country without this important electronic security data. This exemption is a threat to our national security.

The effect of these imported illegal drugs on state resources is daunting and greatly hinders states' ability to combat the opioid crisis and the use of other illegal substances entering the U.S. State legislators from across the nation are therefore greatly concerned that without proper advance

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electronic manifesting and security screening, they cannot limit the massive influx of dangerous, illegal, defective and counterfeit items and substances into their states. Most of these illegal items are sold over online marketplaces. From opioids and other illicit substances to counterfeit and patent-infringing items and devices, millions of shipments originating from foreign posts are entering every state and penetrating every corner of this nation through the mail. Legitimate avenues and means of commerce, trade, intellectual property and entrepreneurialism are being threatened by overseas counterfeiters, narco-traffickers, and patent infringers. State legislators call upon Congress to act quickly to stem the continued growth and operation of these criminals by passing the STOP Act.

The STOP Act would require advance electronic data screening of all inbound shipments to the United States in order to facilitate identification and interception of illegal substances and other dangerous, counterfeit and patent-infringing goods.

Under the current climate, it is critically important that CBP have access to advance electronic manifest data for all packages coming into the United States. NCSL urges all members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate to support the STOP Act (H.R. 1057 and S. 372). Should you have questions or need additional information about the STOP Act, please feel free to contact Ethan Wilson (202-624-8686 / ethan.wilson@ncsl.org) or Susan Fredrick (202-624-3566 / susan.fredrick@ncsl.org).

Sincerely,

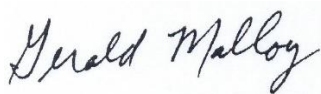


Senator Wayne Harper, Utah

Co-chairs of NCSL's Communications, Financial Services and Interstate Commerce Committee



Representative Brian Patrick Kennedy, Rhode Island
Speaker Pro Tem



Senator Gerald Malloy, South Carolina

Chair, NCSL's Law, Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee