

Fentanyl One-Pager

Purpose: The purpose of this 1-pager is to explain the extensive work Rep. Vasquez has done to combat fentanyl smuggling into the United States.

Legislation led by Rep. Vasquez

- **H.R. 3658, the Joint Task Force to Combat Opioid Trafficking Act** - This bill enhances border security operations to detect, interdict, disrupt, and prevent illicit narcotics and synthetic opioids, like Fentanyl, from being smuggled into the United States. It mandates a requirement for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to report back to Congress whether or not it will establish a task force and authorizes DHS Joint Task Force's to cooperate with, and receive assistance from, groups outside of DHS to accomplish their mission.
- **Amendment to H.R. 2, the Secure the Border Act of 2023 (Diaz-Balart R-FL)** - Rep. Vasquez led an amendment to H.R. 2 which would have provided \$305 million for the procurement and deployment of non-intrusive inspection technology to detect and interdict the smuggling of illicit cargo, like fentanyl, through ports of entry. This amendment was not adopted into the bill.
- **H.R. 8992, the Stop Fentanyl at the Border Act** - This bill appropriates over \$5 billion for border security initiatives. This includes hiring additional U.S. Customs and Border Protection law enforcement and support personnel, bolstering U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) operations, deploying Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) technology at ports of entry, creating an out-bound inspection program to prevent the illegal smuggling of firearms and currency, and supporting the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program.
- **H.R. 6280, the Smart Border Protection Act** - This bill authorizes over \$500 million to improve staffing at ports of entry, deploy more Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) technology, and improve infrastructure at ports of entry.
- **H.R. 8058, the No More Narcos Act** - This bill protects students by establishing an informational campaign to educate students in border communities on the dangers of working with cartels and mandates a national strategy to combat cartels from targeting minors to act as human and drug smugglers.
- **H.R. 7185, the HIDTA Reauthorization Act (Duarte R-CA) (GV is the co-lead)** - This bill reauthorizes the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program through 2030 and provides over \$300 million a year for the program to combat fentanyl and other illicit drug smuggling.

Bills Cosponsored by Rep. Vasquez

- **H.R. 1839, the Combating Illicit Xylazine Act (Panetta D-CA)** - This bill would schedule xylazine, a growing fentanyl additive, under the Controlled Substances Act. Xylazine is a veterinary sedative, regulated by FDA for animal use. Because it is not scheduled under the Controlled Substances Act, DEA has limited enforcement power over xylazine, but traffickers can buy it easily in order to cut their supply of fentanyl. Xylazine addiction is harder to treat, harder to quit, and causes more long-term side effects than fentanyl.

Letters led by Rep. Vasquez

- **Appropriations letter to fight fentanyl smuggling** - Rep. Vasquez's March 29th, 2023 letter to the Chair and Ranking Member of the Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Homeland Security requested \$305 million to procure and deploy non-intrusive inspection technology at

ports of entry along the border and \$113 million to hire an additional 350 CBP officers to operate this technology at ports of entry.

- **New Democrat letter for funding to fight fentanyl smuggling** - Rep. Vasquez's May 10th, 2023 letter to the Chair and Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Committee requests supplemental funding to combat illicit fentanyl smuggling across the border. Specifically, this letter asked for 500 additional U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents at ports of entry, to expand the Fentanyl Abatement and Response Team (FAST), to create additional Transnational Criminal Investigative Units (TCIU), to invest in training and equipment to protect officers from fentanyl exposure, and to expedite procurement and deployment of non-intrusive inspection technology at ports of entry.
- **H.R. 3658 letter to Homeland Security Committee (X2)** - Rep. Vasquez's July 27th, 2023 and July 18th, 2024 letters to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Homeland Security asks the committee to bring H.R. 3658, the Joint Task Force to Combat Opioid Trafficking Act, up for consideration in a hearing. They also emphasize the importance of stopping the flow of deadly synthetic opioids, like fentanyl, from entering the US, and explain the ways that this bill will help address opioid smuggling.
- **New Democrat letter for supplemental funding to fight fentanyl smuggling** - Rep. Vasquez's August 31st, 2023 letter to Speaker McCarthy urges him to bring President Biden's request for supplemental appropriations that provide support for border security, migrant assistance, anti-smuggling technology, and national security. Particularly, this letter focuses on procuring and deploying non-intrusive inspection technology to interdict fentanyl at ports of entry.
- **Tactical Aerostat Letter to CBP** - Rep. Vasquez's October 12, 2023 letter to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) urged the permanent deployment of Tactical Aerostats in the El Paso Sector. Tactical Aerostats are an air-based surveillance system that significantly improves law enforcement's ability to monitor and respond to smuggling/trafficking activities in rural stretches of borderlands.
- **FY25 NDAA Priority Letter** - Rep. Vasquez's April 12, 2024 letter to the Chair and Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) included his priorities for the bill, including his efforts to include H.R. 3658 - the Joint Task Force to Combat Opioid Trafficking Act in the FY25 NDAA.

Letters signed by Rep. Vasquez

- **New Democrat letter to House leadership on Immigration** - This May 11th New Democrat letter, led by Rep. Stanton to House leadership, discusses the need for bipartisan collaboration to reform our broken immigration system and protect our southern border. Notably, this letter mentions support for further investments into border safety technology, personnel, and infrastructure to prevent the smuggling of deadly opioids, like fentanyl.
- **New Democrat letter to the Office of Management and Budget on Border Security** - This July 26th letter, led by Rep. Stanton to Director Young of OMB, emphasizes the New Democrat Coalition's belief in comprehensive immigration reform and border security. Further, this letter mentions the Member's preparedness to legislate to provide additional staff for CBP, the proper innovative technologies, and other border security resources necessary to interrupt drug trafficking, improve outcomes for migrants, and streamline immigration processes.

Votes taken by Rep. Vasquez

- **H.R. 2, the Secure the Border Act** (Diaz-Balart R-FL) - This Republican bill builds 900 miles of border wall, broadly expands border security measures, increases Border Patrol by 22k agents, authorizes local law enforcement agencies to carry out immigration enforcement, increases detention and legal penalties for undocumented immigrants (including families & children), implements nationwide use of e-verify, and prohibits funds from being used to provide shelter, transportation, or other assistance services to immigrants, among other things.
 - Rep. Vasquez voted NO
- **H.R. 469, the HALT Fentanyl Act** (Rep. Griffith R-VA) - This bill permanently places fentanyl-related substances as a class into schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act. A schedule I controlled substance is a drug, substance, or chemical that has a high potential for abuse; has no currently accepted medical value; and is subject to regulatory controls and administrative, civil, and criminal penalties under the Controlled Substances Act.
 - Rep. Vasquez voted YES
- **H.R. 2882, the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024** (Ciscomani R-AZ) - This bill finalized FY24 funding for the Department of Homeland Security, including funding for 22,000 Border Patrol Agents, Autonomous Surveillance Towers (ASTs), and Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) technology to detect fentanyl.
 - Rep. Vasquez voted YES

Fentanyl-related meetings taken by Rep. Vasquez

- Santa Teresa Port Director - January 20th, 2023
- Sunland Park Mayor and Police Chief - February 15th, 2023
- Las Cruces Police Chief - March 15th, 2023
- Northern Regional Sheriff's Roundtable - May 1st, 2023
- Southwest Regional Sheriff's Roundtable - May 29th, 2023
- New Mexico Department of Public Safety - August 21st, 2023
- Santa Teresa Port of Entry - October 30th, 2023
- Connie Vigil (Constituent) - November 16th, 2023
- Testified before the Homeland Security Committee on H.R. 3658 - December 6th, 2023
- Doña Ana County Sheriff - February 1st, 2024

Caucus Membership

- Rep. Vasquez is a member of the Bipartisan Fentanyl Caucus
- Rep. Vasquez is a member of the Democrats for Border Security Task Force