

Republicans Host Parents of Fentanyl Victims: Our Children Didn't Overdose; 'They Were Poisoned'



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Parents whose children died after unknowingly ingesting fentanyl joined House Republicans at a roundtable Thursday to tell their stories and implore Congress to act on the growing epidemic.

The parents' resounding message at the roundtable, led by Rep. Jim Banks (R-IN) and the Republican Study Committee, was that their children had been "poisoned" and that their deaths were not overdoses.

“I would like you to think about who in your family, who do you know that has to die for you to pass some legislation on fentanyl?” asked Barbara Walsh, who brought a poster of her daughter, who she said died at 24 “from fentanyl that could have killed four people.”

Walsh added, “She did not have a substance abuse disorder ... and she didn't get it from a pill. She got it from a product that she thought was a regular ol' thing, and I can't share that with you because it's with the DA [district attorney] right now.”

Walsh noted she has waited 13 months and is still waiting for a prosecution in her daughter's case that may or may not come.



Barbara Walsh brought a poster of her late daughter Sophia to the U.S. Capitol, September 15, 2022. (Breitbart News)

Patricia Drewes, who also lost her 24-year-old daughter, her only child, brought with her to the roundtable a box of obituaries she said she had collected from across the country of those who died from fentanyl.

Drewes said she wanted to send them to President Joe Biden but said, “I doubt very seriously that he would actually get them.” Banks then offered to deliver the obituaries to Biden.

“And they're not overdosing,” Drewes clarified. “My child didn't overdose. None of our children overdosed. They were poisoned, and it needs to stop.”

“Fourteen months ago today I hugged my son for the last time,” Lori Ashenfelder said tearfully at the event of her late son, Dean, who died at 31. Ashenfelder said her son struggled with addiction for years

after being prescribed opioids for an injury.

Next to Ashenfelder sat Rebecca Deyloff, who held up two of her daughter Mackinzie's senior pictures as she spoke about her death. "She had been on her own for only four months when she passed away," Deyloff said.



Rebecca Deyloff speaks about her late daughter Mackinzie at a roundtable in Washington, DC, September 15, 2022. (Republican Study Committee)

Synthetic fentanyl is highly addictive and becomes deadly at just two milligrams, according to the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), which **noted** more than 70,000 individuals died from synthetic opioids, which include fentanyl, from January 2021 to January 2022.

The illicit form of the drug is often mixed in with or disguised as other drugs, like cocaine and methamphetamine, and many fentanyl victims "have no idea they are ingesting" it, DEA Administrator Anne Milgram states on the agency website.

A couple parents at the roundtable said their late children had taken what turned out to be a "fake" version of Percocet, an addictive medication often prescribed for severe pain.

Synthetic fentanyl is "a manmade drug, 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine," Nate Moellering said at the roundtable. Moellering now works at a recovery center after he himself struggled for a decade with addiction, as **detailed** in a profile by local Indiana outlet WANE.

Moellering explained that fentanyl is "made in China. China sends it to Mexico, and they bring it through the Mexico border."

Republicans present at the event included two from the major border state of Texas, Rep. Chip Roy, who said he has begun promoting warnings about fentanyl through school districts, and Rep. August

Pfluger.



Reps. Tom Tiffany (R-WI), August Pfluger (R-TX), Jim Banks (R-IN), Kat Cammack (R-FL), and Lisa McClain (R-MI) listen to parents of fentanyl victims at a roundtable at the U.S. Capitol on September 15, 2022. (Breitbart News)

Rep. Tom Tiffany (R-WI), who was also at the event, ripped into his Democrat colleagues, who have complete control of Washington at present, saying, “We must acknowledge the truth in that they’re doing nothing to help the American people with this problem.”

Tiffany, a member of the House Judiciary Committee, vowed, “If we get the majority back, this border issue is going to be one of our number one issues in the Judiciary Committee. I assure you of that. I guarantee you that.”

The roundtable coincided with Banks introducing a [bill](#) Thursday called the Protecting Kids from Candy-Flavored Drugs Act, which would increase penalties against dealers and manufacturers of illegal drugs designed to mimic candy or beverages.

Banks said in a statement about the new legislation, “There is nothing humane about the Democrats’ open borders and soft-on-criminals agendas. ... The RSC is committed to solving the fentanyl crisis by securing our border and cracking down on drug traffickers, and especially those that target our children.”

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