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ATTORNEY GENERAL SKRMETTI URGES PRESIDENT BIDEN TO CLASSIFY FENTANYL AS A WEAPON OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Nashville—Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti is joining a multistate effort urging President Biden to classify fentanyl as a Weapon of Mass Destruction. The 18 state attorneys general demand the president take decisive action in response to the record increase in overdose deaths related to the lethal substance nationwide and the potential for deliberate misuse.

This action would require the Department of Homeland Security and the Drug Enforcement Administration to coordinate a response with other agencies, including the Department of Defense—as opposed to the federal government only treating the substance as a narcotics control problem.

"Fentanyl has caused too many tragic deaths on an individual level and, as we have seen overseas, it can also be weaponized to cause mass casualties," said General Skrmetti. "Our governments at every level must take a broad-spectrum approach to protecting American lives from the harms of fentanyl."

The attorney generals are deeply troubled by the threat this substance poses to the nation. Fentanyl is cheap to produce, inherently lethal, and easily available- all factors which make it attractive to those who might seek to use it as a chemical weapon.

In the letter, the attorneys general argue: "Just two milligrams of fentanyl is needed to kill an adult, and it can easily be placed in other substances. In fact, it already is—according to reports, at least one-third of illicitly manufactured pills are contaminated with fentanyl…In addition…fentanyl has already been used as a weapon…The threat of a state enemy using this drug to do harm to the American people cannot be understated."

More than 75,000 Americans died from overdose of synthetic opioids, mainly fentanyl, in the 12-month period ending in Feb. 2022. This substance is now the number one cause of death for adults aged 18-45.

General Skrmetti joins the attorneys general of the following states and territories: Florida, Connecticut, Arkansas, Guam, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

To read the full letter, click here:
https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/attorneygeneral/documents/pr/2022/pr22-35-letter.pdf