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TENNESSEE URGES PRESIDENT BIDEN'S ADMINISTRATION TO DESIGNATE MEXICAN DRUG CARTELS AS FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

Nashville- Tennessee Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti joined a coalition of 21 states in calling on President Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken to designate Mexican drug cartels as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) under federal law. The coalition contends this designation would free up resources to confront the deadly opioid crisis with the urgency it deserves.

Not one community in the United States has been left untouched by the opioid crisis. More than 100,000 Americans died from drug overdoses last year, and synthetic opioids like fentanyl were to blame for more than half of those deaths.

In the letter, General Skrmetti explains that the U.S. government knows precisely how this poison is entering our country. Cartels like the Sinaloa cartel and Cartel Jalisco New Generation import raw materials from China, utilize them to produce deadly synthetic opioids at low cost, and traffic these poisons across the southwestern border and into our communities.

Between October 2021 and June 2022, U.S. Customs and Border Protection seized 8,425 pounds of fentanyl smuggled into the United States. Additionally, these cartels are doing much more than smuggling poison into our country; they are assassinating rivals and government officials, ambushing and killing Americans at the border, and engaging in an armed insurgency against the Mexican government.

General Skrmetti previously joined 17 other state attorneys general in [calling on President Biden to declare fentanyl a weapon of mass destruction](#). Designating major cartels as Foreign Terrorist Organizations will provide state and federal law enforcement agencies increased authority to freeze cartel assets, deny entry to cartel members, and allow prosecutors to pursue stricter punishments against those who provide them material support.

General Skrmetti signed the letter, led by Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares, in addition to attorneys general from Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, and West Virginia.

Read the letter in its entirety [here](#).

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