

Floor Speech: Fentanyl Crisis

U.S. Senator Ted Budd (R-NC)

Wednesday, April 2, 2025

Mr. President,

The fentanyl epidemic has touched nearly every American. Whether it is a family member, a friend, a neighbor, or a co-worker—we all know someone whose life has been affected by the tragic reality of this crisis. It's widespread. It's devastating. And it can't be ignored.

For too long, this crisis has been fueled by the chaos at our southern border. And now it's happening at our northern border.

Today, I rise to honor the American lives lost to our country's horrific fentanyl epidemic, and I call on our Canadian allies to shut down these operations before more devastation occurs.

For many Americans, it started with a prescription. For others, it was a single, accidental exposure. But for too many, it ended the same way—with a loss of life and the eternal grief that comes from losing a loved one.

The harsh reality is that fentanyl is the leading cause of death for Americans ages 18 to 45. Not cancer. Not car accidents. Fentanyl.

Last year alone, as my colleagues have shared with you, more than 70,000 Americans died from a fentanyl overdose, and unsurprisingly, the Biden administration failed to act. Instead, President Biden willingly chose to let the situation get worse.

For years, our southern border has been a major entry point for illegal drugs to pour into our country. But, under President Trump's leadership, illegal crossings at the southern border have now dropped 94 percent.

That's real progress.

Now, however, we are seeing a dangerous shift. Drug cartels have found a new route and a new loophole to continue trafficking drugs into our communities—and it's through the northern border with Canada.

Just last year, Customs and Border Patrol seized enough fentanyl at the northern border to kill 9.5 million Americans.

That's nothing short of alarming.

In fact, a member of the Sinaloa cartel, one of Mexico's largest and most well-known operations, openly claimed that:

“Canada’s border is much larger than Mexico’s. There are more entry points through Canada than through Mexico—a lot more entry points. So that won’t stop us.”

And when asked about the impact of the fentanyl killing countless Americans, he said:

“Unfortunately, here, for money, we do anything. It’s business. It’s a business.”

Friends, killing Americans is not a business. We should not be endorsing known criminal activity with inaction. This is nothing short of a serious threat to our national security.

Mr. President, when I talk to the sheriffs in all 100 counties across North Carolina, I repeatedly hear the same message: every single county in North Carolina is a border county.

The U.S.-Canada border is the world’s longest international border—at more than 5,500 miles long. But it remains extraordinarily vulnerable, as criminal cartel networks continue to take advantage of the gaps in our porous northern border.

I think it’s important to know that 87 percent of all terror watchlist suspects that were encountered at land border ports, last year, they came across our northern border.

We have invested heavily in our southern border infrastructure—rightfully so—and we should continue to do so. But the northern border has been overlooked and under-resourced for way too long. Our law enforcement officers are doing everything they can, but without enough resources, they are being set up to fail. And that’s not fair to them.

We are just watching history repeat itself, and if we don’t act to provide our law enforcement officials with the proper tools and technology that they need to defend our northern border, we’re going to allow this to get even worse.

What’s even more disturbing is that Mexican cartels are now setting up fentanyl labs in Canada and expanding their role in the global drug trade.

As our ally, we need Canada to step up before more lives are lost, because the truth is that behind every statistic is a grieving family. The American people deserve more than just empty words—they deserve real action.

The fentanyl crisis will only continue to strangle our country until we deal with the threat at our northern border like the emergency that it truly is.

I yield the floor.