



BOB CASEY

FIGHTING for PENNSYLVANIA FAMILIES

The Interdiction of Fentanyl at Federal Prisons Act of 2024

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As the opioid crisis continues to impact communities nationwide, aggressive efforts to smuggle narcotics, like fentanyl, into federal prisons through the mail system have grown more sophisticated. 85 percent of the prison population has an active substance use disorder or is incarcerated for a crime involving illicit drugs. Inmates, officers, and staff are at increased risk of lethal exposure or deliberate poisoning attempts, while overdoses in recent years have risen by 600 percent.

The *Interdiction of Fentanyl at Federal Prisons Act* aims to completely eliminate illicit substances and contraband, including fentanyl, from inmate mail before entering the Federal prison system. This bill would direct the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to develop a strategy that, when put into practice, would guarantee that every piece of mail to every BOP detention facility is screened for opioids and other narcotics.

Specifically, the *Interdiction of Fentanyl at Federal Prisons Act* would:

- Require the BOP Director to develop a strategy to intercept and interdict illicit substances mailed to Federal correctional facilities;
- Acquire and deploy equipment and technology to achieve 100 percent scanning capacity of postal and legal mail arriving at Federal correctional facilities;
- Eliminate BOP officer and staff risks of harmful exposure to illicit substances like fentanyl;
- Ensure that incarcerated individuals receive a digital copy of all mail addressed to them, including legal mail, while remaining consistent with the law and BOP procedures governing attorney-client privilege;
- Guarantee the delivery of all contraband-free original mail after it has been screened as soon as is practicable; and
- Provide the BOP with an estimated \$377 million in savings over a 10-year period.

The bill does not alter or compromise the law or any of the existing BOP procedures regarding the handling of legal mail and the need to ensure attorney-client privilege. Instead, it guarantees the digital delivery of all mail, including legal mail, while also ensuring that inmates receive the original, physical mail as soon as is practicable. Preserving the tangible connection between inmates, families, and the parent/child relationship by delivering inmates contraband-free original mail promotes better outcomes by improving a person's ability to assimilate back into society and achieve successful reentry. These remain essential factors to significantly reducing reoffending and recidivism rates.

This legislation also sends a clear message of support to our Nation's 38,000 dedicated corrections officers and staff. Already shorthanded, Congress must act to make corrections officers' working conditions safer in order to improve BOP's recruitment and retention rates.