

[DISCUSSION DRAFT]

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To require the Comptroller General of the United States to carry out a study on the trafficking into the United States of synthetic drugs, and related illicit finance, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

M. _____ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To require the Comptroller General of the United States to carry out a study on the trafficking into the United States of synthetic drugs, and related illicit finance, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 The Congress finds the following:

5 (1) According to the Center for Disease Control
6 and Prevention, over 107,000 people in the United
7 States died from drug overdoses or drug poisonings

1 in the 12-month period ending January 2022, with
2 67 percent of those deaths involving synthetic
3 opioids like fentanyl.

4 (2) According to the United National Office of
5 Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in its “Synthetic Drug
6 Strategy 2021-2025”, the number of synthetic
7 drugs, also called New Psychoactive Substances, has
8 increased 631 percent since 2009, with traffickers
9 introducing an average of 80 new substances to the
10 illicit drug market each year from 2009-2019.

11 (3) In October 2022, F. Michael McDaniel, di-
12 rector of the Houston High Intensity Drug Traf-
13 ficking Areas (HITDA) program testified in Con-
14 gress that one kilogram of fentanyl can produce one
15 million counterfeit pills containing one milligram of
16 fentanyl, saying, “Currently in Houston, Texas, you
17 can buy a kilogram of fentanyl for an average price
18 of \$25,000 to \$30,000. This same kilogram of
19 fentanyl in Culiacán (Mexico) could be purchased at
20 an average price of \$13,500. Currently, the price of
21 a fentanyl pill in Houston ranges from \$6 to \$65.
22 Therefore, an illicit investment of \$30,000 or less
23 could result in a return of \$6 to \$32.5 million.”.

24 (4) According to Celina B. Realuyo, Adjunct
25 Professor, The George Washington University Elliott

1 School of International Affairs, in March 2022 Con-
2 gressional testimony, “Financing is essential to sup-
3 port and sustain the command and control, per-
4 sonnel, arms, communications, logistics and oper-
5 ations of organized crime groups. For this reason,
6 following the money trail and depriving criminals of
7 illicit financial flows can disrupt and disable these
8 networks.”.

9 **SEC. 2. GAO STUDY ON SYNTHETIC DRUGS TRAFFICKING.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the
11 United States shall carry out a study on illicit financing
12 in connection with the trafficking of synthetic drugs, in-
13 cluding fentanyl and methamphetamine, fentanyl- and
14 methamphetamine-related substances, cocaine, and
15 fentanyl and methamphetamine precursors, including—

16 (1) the business of the trafficking of synthetic
17 drugs and related illicit finance, such as the partici-
18 pation of transnational criminal organizations and
19 terror syndicates and their notable trafficking cor-
20 ridors, including source and transit countries;

21 (2) the business models used by these
22 transnational criminal organizations, including U.S.
23 domestic and foreign activities for precursor pur-
24 chase or production, movement along the supply

1 chain, manufacture of the completed product, mar-
2 keting, distribution, sales, and return of proceeds;

3 (3) the overlap of the business model of human
4 trafficking and the trafficking of synthetic drugs
5 and related illicit finance;

6 (4) the use of online illicit drug markets and
7 the use of social media for the marketing, sale, and
8 payment for synthetic drugs;

9 (5) financial methods used by such
10 transnational criminal organizations, including—

11 (A) payment;

12 (B) money laundering; and

13 (C) repatriation of proceeds;

14 (6) the use of social media applications like
15 Snap Chat, Discord, and Facebook and payment ap-
16 plications like CashApp to facilitate financial trans-
17 actions for synthetic drug trafficking, especially
18 among young people; and

19 (7) U.S. Government activities to combat illicit
20 finance related to the trafficking of synthetic drugs,
21 including—

22 (A) interagency collaboration, including
23 personnel detailed to other agencies to support
24 the effort to combat synthetic drugs trafficking
25 and related illicit finance;

1 (B) intergovernmental collaboration;

2 (C) intersectoral collaboration with the pri-
3 vate sector, including the business and non-gov-
4 ernmental communities; and

5 (D) identified gaps or resource deficiencies
6 in combating the trafficking of synthetic drugs
7 and related illicit finance in the coordination
8 and collaboration activities described in sub-
9 paragraphs (A) through (C).

10 (b) REPORT.—The Comptroller General shall issue a
11 report to the Congress containing all findings and deter-
12 minations made in carrying out the study required under
13 subsection (a).