

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 8, 2018

The Honorable John Boozman  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jon Tester  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
128 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Boozman and Ranking Member Tester,

Earlier this year, Congress passed and the President signed into law the INTERDICT Act, which authorizes funding to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for detection devices and personnel that can assist with halting the flow of illicit fentanyl into the United States. We appreciate that the Chairman's Mark of the Fiscal Year 2018 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill contained \$15 million for Customs and Border Protection to fund the INTERDICT Act and respectfully ask that this level of funding be included in the in the Fiscal Year 2018 Omnibus legislation, so that CBP will have the tools necessary to prevent fentanyl, and other illicit narcotics from entering the country.

Our nation is in the midst of the worst drug overdose epidemic this country has ever seen, fueled in large part by heroin and synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl, which are smuggled across our borders and through our ports of entry. CBP agents are the nation's frontline defense against efforts to traffic these dangerous drugs into communities across the country. The agency interdicts and stops millions of pounds of illicit drugs from entering the country every year. In FY17 alone, CBP seized over 1,400 pounds of fentanyl, enough to kill more than 300 million people, or nearly every man, woman, and child in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

CBP has successfully used high-tech chemical screening devices to detect and identify unknown substances. These devices allow agents to safely and efficiently analyze chemical substances found in packages and vehicles entering the country. The INTERDICT Act would enable CBP to purchase more of these devices and hire additional scientific personnel, which will enhance the agency's ability to prevent more of these devastating drugs from going undetected and pouring into our communities.

It is imperative that we give CBP the resources necessary to do its job as best it can. Our efforts to combat the current drug crisis begin with stopping these deadly drugs from flowing into the country. Every seizure made by CBP potentially saves dozens of lives. Congress and this Administration must make addressing the opioid epidemic a top priority. By fully funding the INTERDICT Act, we can provide the much-needed resources to our law enforcement personnel on the front lines of this fight.

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<sup>1</sup> Miroff, Nick. *Mexican Traffickers making New York a hub for lucrative — and deadly — fentanyl*, The Washington Post (2017, November 13), <https://www.washingtonpost.com>.

The INTERDICT Act is supported by the Fraternal Order of Police, National Sheriffs' Association, Major Cities Chiefs Association, Major County Sheriffs' Association, Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, National Tactical Officers Association, National Association of Police Organizations, Sergeants Benevolent Association, International Union of Police Associations, National Narcotics Officers' Associations' Coalition, American Legion, National Border Control Council, Police Assisted Addiction Recovery Initiative, Massachusetts Coalition of Police, New England High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program, Ohio Fraternal Order of Police, and the Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association.

We urge your continued support for \$15 million in funding to allow the acquisition of equipment that can help the CBP take steps to halt the flow of illicit narcotics into our nation. Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your leadership on this important matter.

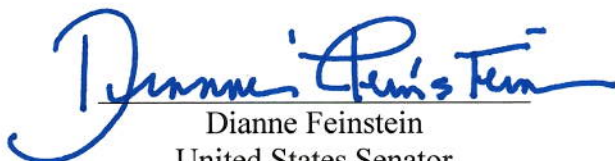
Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Joe Donnelly  
United States Senator



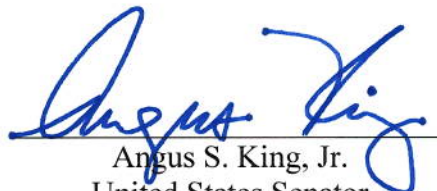
Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



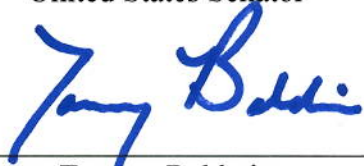
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Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



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Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



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Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator