

**Administrator Anne Milgram Delivers Opening Statement
Before the House Committee on Appropriations
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee**

May 7, 2024

Remarks as Delivered

Thank you. Good morning, Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Cartwright, members of this Committee.

I want to thank the Subcommittee for inviting me to testify today on National Fentanyl Awareness Day. It is appropriate that on National Fentanyl Awareness Day, that I am given the opportunity to highlight for you the national tragedy that is being caused by fentanyl. According to the CDC, in 2022, 107,941 Americans lost their lives. Forty-two percent of Americans in the United States now know someone who has died. This tragedy has not spared cities, suburbs, rural communities, or Tribal lands. Fentanyl is killing all Americans.

Our communities today are being flooded with fentanyl hidden in other drugs or pressed into fake pills by two Mexican cartels – the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco Cartel. We – during the past year – DEA has seized fentanyl throughout the United States at unprecedented levels. Just last year, we seized nearly 79 million fake pills laced with fentanyl and nearly 12,000 pounds of fentanyl powder. Together, this is more than 380 million potential deadly doses of fentanyl seized.

For the nearly 10,000 employees working at DEA, there is no greater urgency than to defeat the Sinaloa and Jalisco cartels, in order to save American lives. The \$3.8 million increase that you provided to DEA this fiscal year is invaluable support for our mission. Thank you. We know that you are under financial constraints, and we are grateful. This increased funding will enable us to continue our critical work to defeat the cartels, to combat the fentanyl epidemic, and to save lives.

Building on our many successes over the past year requires continued support and resources from Congress. With your support, we have continued to transform DEA to meet this unprecedented moment. Our counterthreat teams, which we set up in 2022 and 2023, are active against every single part of the Sinaloa and Jalisco cartels and their criminal networks. These teams include special agents, intelligence analysts, targeters, program analysts, data scientists, and digital or cyber specialists. We also have partners from across the U.S. government that have now joined our teams. The counterthreat teams are providing DEA with an operating picture of each cartel that enables us to adapt to the ever-evolving threat.

We added a third counterthreat team in 2023 to focus on the elaborate illicit finance of the cartels. This team is providing DEA with a detailed financial picture of the cartels, including their global money laundering operations. And I'm sure we will talk more about this today, but we are tracking billions of dollars that are being moved by the cartels across the globe. The

work of this team has allowed us to open a significant number of new money laundering investigations targeting these two cartels.

In 2023, DEA took action against every single part of the global fentanyl supply chain run by the cartels. When I testified before you last April, we had just announced charges against 28 members, suppliers, chemical brokers, laboratory managers, weapons traffickers, assassins, and smugglers of the Chapitos network of the Sinaloa Cartel that are responsible for bringing deadly fentanyl into the U.S.

In May of last year, we announced *Operation Last Mile*, where we arrested 3,337 people across the United States for working in partnership with the two cartels to sell deadly fentanyl in our communities and on social media. Those investigations showed us that half of all those cases were directly linked to the sale of fentanyl on social media.

In June and October of last year, as part of our investigations into Chinese chemical companies, DEA charged 12 Chinese chemical companies, 24 Chinese nationals, and took two Chinese nationals into custody. These are the first-ever charges to be brought against Chinese companies for fentanyl trafficking, and they demonstrate that precursor chemicals are being sold, that they are cheap, that they are sold online on websites, they are shipped through common carriers, and payment for those chemicals are made through cryptocurrency, Bitcoin, Western Union, PayPal, Alibaba, and other common sources.

In 2024, DEA continues to innovate and to work with urgency to save American lives. The insights we have learned from our counterthreat teams, we are taking them and we are building the next step in the global fight against fentanyl by standing up the Trident Directorate. This Directorate consists of two DEA-led joint operational task forces that will be staffed by individuals from across U.S. law enforcement, military, and intelligence communities – so the United States can use every possible tool to defeat the Sinaloa and Jalisco Cartels.

Trident will allow us to leverage all of DEA's critical information on the cartels with our state, local, federal, intelligence, and defense partners. We believe that this joint task force will allow us to significantly disrupt the two cartels globally. We very much hope that Congress will continue to support this work and to help us defeat the cartels.

Before I close, I imagine that you have read press reports regarding the DOJ proposal to reschedule marijuana. Because the formal rule-making process is ongoing, and my role in that process is to determine the scheduling of drugs, it would be inappropriate for me to respond to questions on this rescheduling matter.

I also want to take a moment and offer my deep thanks to every member of the Subcommittee for the work that you do on this National Fentanyl Awareness Day.

The men and women of DEA are working tirelessly every day to defeat the cartels and save American lives, and we all thank you for your support in Fiscal Year 2024. The threat continues and the work continues. Thank you.