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Governor Ron DeSantis Signs Legislation Cracking Down on Opioid Dealers and Traffickers

LAKELAND, Fla. — Today, Governor Ron DeSantis signed into law HB 95, which enhances penalties for the sale and distribution of opioids in Florida, including fentanyl.

“Floridians of all walks of life have witnessed the destruction caused by the opioid epidemic across our state,” said **Governor Ron DeSantis**. “While the Biden administration has failed to stop the flow of dangerous drugs, including fentanyl, across our southern border, we are taking action in Florida to lower both the demand and the supply of illicit and illegal drugs.”

“Earlier today, I held an assembly at a school in Kissimmee to heighten students’ understanding of the dangerous and life-altering effects of substance use and abuse,” said First Lady Casey DeSantis. “Our initiative, *The Facts. Your Future.*, not only tells our youth to say no to drugs, but also teaches them why. I am proud of Governor DeSantis for signing into law enhanced penalties for the sale and distribution of opioids today. We’re committed to tackling this problem from all angles and striving for a drug free Florida.”

“There is a reason why Florida is safe,” said **Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd**. “It is safe because of our Legislature and because of our Governor leading the way. 116 people in Polk

County alone last year died from just a small amount of fentanyl. We have a Governor that cares for you and wants to make sure that the sellers pay a price. When we have these pieces of legislation and you agree to sign them into law, you personally are saving the lives of hundreds or thousands of people across the state and we appreciate it.”

“From day one, Governor, you have been steadfast in your commitment to look at this opioid epidemic from a very wholistic approach,” said **Seminole County Sheriff Dennis Lemma**. “You cannot address this problem without holding the drug dealers accountable to the fullest extent of the law. I want to thank the leaders and sponsors of this bill and the Florida Sheriffs. This bill and this effort will save lives and I thank the Governor for you and your team and the work that you do.”

“When we think of fentanyl, we think of the addicts and the dealers, but what we forget sometimes are the other victims in this crisis: the families and the children,” said **Polk County Fire Rescue Paramedic Tom Konze**. “As a first responder, with the signing of this bill today, I believe we are one step closer to solving this crisis.”

“I lost my 23-year-old son to a fentanyl overdose in July, 2018,” said **Mike Itani, parent who lost his son to fentanyl**. “He was a normal kid, involved in sports, nothing abnormal. A lot of people think of people that have passed away from an overdose, they think of them as junkies, but they are everyday normal people just like us. I truly believe that if you are intentionally giving somebody something that you know is going to kill them, it is a murder. Hopefully this will help other families in the future and get some of these guys off the street.”

HB 95 implements recommendations of the Statewide Task Force on Opioid Abuse, which was created by Governor DeSantis in 2019 to develop a statewide strategy and identify best practices to combat the opioid epidemic through education, treatment, prevention, recovery, and law enforcement. Specifically, the bill:

- Adds methamphetamine to the list of specified controlled substances which, if the substance causes the death of a person, can subject the person who distributed the controlled substance to a conviction for first degree felony murder.

- Enhances the penalties for the sale of a controlled substance within 1,000 feet of substance abuse treatment facilities.
- Increases the mandatory minimum sentence for trafficking fentanyl from 3 years to 7 years for 4-14 grams, and from 15 to 20 years for 14-28 grams.

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