

.....
(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To establish the Joint Task Force to Counter the Illicit Synthetic Narcotics.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

A BILL

To establish the Joint Task Force to Counter the Illicit
Synthetic Narcotics.

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. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Joint Task Force to
5 Counter Illicit Synthetic Narcotics Act of 2024”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The United States is experiencing a crisis
9 of substance abuse and addiction resulting in the

1 deaths of hundreds of thousands of Americans. Most
2 of these deaths involve some form of opioids.

3 (2) There are many elements of Federal, State,
4 territorial, Tribal, and local governments working to
5 combat the opioid epidemic.

6 (3) No central entity exists at the appropriate
7 level whereby different agencies can share informa-
8 tion and coordinate efforts to combat the opioid cri-
9 sis.

10 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT TASK FORCE TO**
11 **COUNTER ILLICIT SYNTHETIC NARCOTICS.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is established a Joint Task
13 Force to Counter Illicit Synthetic Narcotics (hereby re-
14 ferred to as “JTF–ISN”).

15 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—The JTF–ISN shall include rep-
16 resentation from each of the following entities:

17 (1) The Department of Justice including the—

18 (A) Drug Enforcement Administration;

19 (B) Federal Bureau of Investigation; and

20 (C) Assistant U.S. Attorneys and Trial At-
21 torneys, as the Director deems appropriate.

22 (2) The Department of the Treasury including
23 the—

24 (A) Counter-Fentanyl Strike Force;

1 (B) Internal Revenue Service Criminal In-
2 vestigation;

3 (C) Financial Crimes Enforcement Net-
4 work;

5 (D) Office of Foreign Assets Control; and

6 (E) Office of Intelligence and Analysis.

7 (3) The Department of Homeland Security in-
8 cluding—

9 (A) Homeland Security Investigations;

10 (B) U.S. Customs and Border Protection
11 including the National Targeting Center;

12 (C) Immigration and Customs Enforce-
13 ment (ICE); and

14 (D) the United States Coast Guard.

15 (4) The Department of State.

16 (5) The Department of Commerce.

17 (6) The Department of Defense.

18 (7) The Office of the Director of National Intel-
19 ligence.

20 (8) Any other agency the Director deems appro-
21 priate (collectively the “JTF–ISN Members”).

22 (c) DIRECTOR OF JOINT TASK FORCE TO ILLICIT
23 SYNTHETIC NARCOTICS.—

1 (1) The JTF–ISN shall be led by a Director
2 who shall be appointed by the President, by and
3 with the advice and consent of the Senate.

4 (2) The Director shall report directly to the At-
5 torney General.

6 (4) The Director shall be compensated at the
7 rate of basic pay prescribed for level II of the Execu-
8 tive Schedule under section 5313 of title 5, United
9 States Code.

10 (d) REPORTING.—

11 (1) The Director of the JTF–ISN shall report
12 to the Attorney General on matters related to the
13 budget, programs, and activities of the JTF–ISN,
14 and to the President on the planning and progress
15 of joint counter- illicit synthetic narcotics operations.

16 (2) The Director shall submit a report, and
17 upon request of the chairman or ranking member of
18 any such committee, a briefing to the Committee on
19 the Judiciary and the Committee on Homeland Se-
20 curity of the House of Representatives and the Com-
21 mittee on the Judiciary and the Committee on
22 Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the
23 Senate—

24 (A) not later than 6 months after the date
25 of the enactment of this Act; and

1 (B) every 6 months thereafter.

2 (3) Each report and requested briefing shall in-
3 clude—

4 (A) a comprehensive plan covering the 2-
5 year period after submission of the report—

6 (i) a description of the goals of the
7 JTF–ISN;

8 (ii) description of areas of improve-
9 ment with respect to collaboration among
10 the participating agencies; and

11 (iii) an estimate of the funding and
12 staff needed for the continued work of the
13 JTF–ISN;

14 (B) a statement of the budget priorities of
15 the JTF–ISN for each year in that period;

16 (C) a description of the efforts of the
17 JTF–ISN to investigate and prosecute illicit
18 synthetic narcotics trafficking crimes, including
19 raids conducted, assets seized, assets forfeited
20 and indictments brought and convictions; and

21 (D) efforts of the JTF–ISN to address
22 matters related to the role of the People’s Re-
23 public of China in the opioids crisis.

1 **SEC. 4. PRIMARY MISSIONS OF JTF-ISN.**

2 The primary mission of the JTF-ISN shall be to di-
3 rect counter opioid and synthetic narcotics activities, in-
4 cluding disruption activities and associated investigations,
5 and provide strategic coordination on related activities, in-
6 cluding but not limited to sanctions enforcement, con-
7 ducting joint operations, raids, and other tactical actions
8 in coordination with Federal, State, territorial, Tribal, and
9 local law enforcement agencies through memorandums of
10 understanding. This support includes legal actions against
11 traffickers and foreign entities, particularly in the People's
12 Republic of China, complicit in the opioid trade.

13 **SEC. 5. AUTHORITY AND LIMITATIONS.**

14 (a) AUTHORITY.—The JTF-ISN shall be vested with
15 power and authority to—

16 (1) investigate and prosecute violations of Fed-
17 eral law relating to the trafficking of illicit synthetic
18 narcotics ; related offenses, such as money laun-
19 dering and other financial crimes, smuggling, and
20 false statements; as well as any matters that arise
21 or might arise directly from its investigations;

22 (2) in the case of a prosecution relating to non-
23 U.S. persons outside of the United States, the JTF-
24 ISN shall bring the case either in the district where
25 the crime was committed or in the district where the
26 Drug Enforcement Administration is located;

1 (3) facilitate the sharing of information between
2 JTF–ISN Members in a timely manner;

3 (4) establish protocols for interagency referrals
4 and procedures for referring cases to prosecuting
5 and sanctions designating authorities as appropriate;

6 (5) develop strategies to address the role of the
7 People’s Republic of China in the illicit synthetic
8 narcotics crisis;

9 (6) work cooperatively with State, territorial,
10 Tribal, and local law enforcement agencies to combat
11 and prosecute trafficking of illicit synthetic nar-
12 cotics;

13 (7) assess and improve existing methods of in-
14 vestigating and prosecuting illicit synthetic narcotics
15 trafficking crimes; and

16 (8) conduct direct operational activities, includ-
17 ing joint operations, raids, and other tactical ac-
18 tions, to disrupt illicit synthetic narcotics trafficking
19 networks and bring offenders to justice.

20 (b) LIMITATION.—The Director of the JTF–ISN may
21 not direct the execution of operational activities outside
22 the scope of counter-opioid efforts related to illicit syn-
23 thetic narcotics suppliers and their networks pursuant to
24 the primary missions of the JTF-ISN.

1 **SEC. 6. RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES.**

2 The Attorney General shall resolve disagreements be-
3 tween the JTF–ISN and the head of a department, agen-
4 cy, or element of the United States Government on des-
5 ignations, assignments, plans, or responsibilities under
6 this section. The head of such a department, agency, or
7 element may appeal the resolution of the disagreement by
8 the Attorney General to the President.

9 **SEC. 7. INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF JTF–ISN.**

10 (a) INTELLIGENCE COORDINATION.—The Director of
11 the JTF–ISN shall establish and maintain within the
12 JTF–ISN an intelligence coordination element which shall
13 have primary responsibility within the United States Gov-
14 ernment for analysis of illicit synthetic narcotics and re-
15 lated trafficking organizations from all sources of intel-
16 ligence, whether collected inside or outside the United
17 States.

18 (b) STRATEGIC OPERATIONAL PLANNING.—The Di-
19 rector of the JTF–ISN shall establish and maintain within
20 the JTF–ISN a strategic operational planning element
21 which shall provide strategic operational plans for counter-
22 opioid operations conducted by the United States Govern-
23 ment.

24 (1) Strategic operational planning shall include
25 the mission, objectives to be achieved, tasks to be
26 performed, interagency coordination of operational

1 activities, and the assignment of roles and respon-
2 sibilities.

3 (2) The Director of the JTF–ISN shall monitor
4 the implementation of strategic operational plans
5 and shall obtain information from each element of
6 the intelligence community, and from each other de-
7 partment, agency, or element of the United States
8 Government relevant for monitoring the progress of
9 such entity in implementing such plans.

10 (c) OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL.—The Director
11 of the JTF–CO shall establish and maintain within the
12 JTF–ISN an Office of General Counsel which shall pro-
13 vide legal advice in support of the JTF–ISN and its direc-
14 torates.

15 (d) OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL COORDINATION.—
16 The Director of the JTF–ISN shall establish and main-
17 tain within the JTF–ISN an Office of Congressional Co-
18 ordination which shall coordinate communications of the
19 JFT–ISN with Congress and ensure compliance with re-
20 porting and briefing obligations under this Act.

21 **SEC. 8. RETENTION OF EXISTING AUTHORITIES.**

22 Each of the individual JTF–ISN Members maintain
23 their existing authorities to investigate and prosecute traf-
24 ficking crimes relating to illicit synthetic narcotics.

1 **SEC. 9. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act, the term “illicit synthetic narcotics”
3 means—

4 (1) “controlled substances,” as defined in sec-
5 tion 802(6) of title 21, United States Code, with the
6 exception of—

7 (A) substances of natural origins;

8 (B) medications that are lawful under the
9 laws of the United States and the Drug En-
10 forcement Administration has provided an im-
11 port permit to the importing organization for
12 the import of said medication;

13 (2) “listed chemicals,” as defined in section 802
14 of title 21, United States Code; and

15 (3) active pharmaceutical ingredients or chemi-
16 cals that are used in the production of controlled
17 substances described in paragraphs (1) and (2).

18 **SEC. 10. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

19 Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize
20 the Joint Task Force to Counter Illicit Synthetic Nar-
21 cotics to investigate, target, or prosecute individuals for
22 personal drug use or to pursue enforcement actions
23 against low-level drug dealing that does not involve signifi-
24 cant connections to larger trafficking networks. The activi-
25 ties of the Joint Task Force shall focus exclusively on ad-
26 dressing the international trafficking of illicit synthetic

- 1 narcotics and their associated networks, particularly those
- 2 involving significant threats to public health, national se-
- 3 curity, and the economy.