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March 31, 2026

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
511 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
2267 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Support Passage of S. 545/ H.R. 1266- the Combating Illicit Xylazine Act

Dear Speaker, Majority Leader, and Minority Leaders:

We, the undersigned Attorneys General, write to request that you urgently pass S. 545/ H.R. 1266, the Combating Illicit Xylazine Act. This legislation seeks to confront the proliferation of illicit xylazine by classifying its use as a controlled substance and providing resources to law enforcement to better protect communities and reduce opioid overdose deaths. Critically, this legislation has strong bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate.

Xylazine is a non-opioid veterinary tranquilizer for large animals, such as horses and deer.[1] It is not approved for human use and there is no accepted medical use in humans. In recent years, xylazine became a commonly used adulterant to illicit opioids, including most frequently fentanyl.[2] The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has warned that

[1] Press Release, FDA, FDA Takes Action to Restrict Unlawful import of Xylazine [hereinafter FDA Press Release], https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-takes-action-restrict-unlawful-import-xylazine.
[2] *The Growing Threat of Xylazine and its Mixture with Illicit Drugs, DEA Joint Intelligence Report*, October 2022, [hereinafter DEA Joint Intelligence Report] https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/The%20Growing%20Threat%20of%20Xylazine%20and%20its%20Mixture%20with%20Illicit%20Drugs.pdf.

xylazine is "making the deadliest drug threat our country has ever faced, fentanyl, even deadlier."[3] Also known on the street as "tranq"[4], the DEA believes that xylazine is so dangerous that it has issued a number of Public Safety Alerts.

Xylazine is a sedative known to depress breathing, blood pressure, heart rate, and body temperature, as well as cause unconsciousness, necrosis, and death. As the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) highlights, xylazine reduces the efficacy of traditional opioid rescue treatment "because xylazine is not an opioid, it does not respond to opioid reversal agents such as naloxone; therefore, if illicit opioid products containing xylazine are used, naloxone might be less effective in fully reversing an overdose."[5] According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), the number of fatalities involving xylazine is increasing exponentially.[6] The DEA reports that xylazine's prevalence is increasing, and it is now in all 50 States.[7] National statistics on the presence of xylazine in overdose deaths are "widely underestimated" because of limited testing and the variance in testing procedures by state and local law enforcement.[8] Despite the limited data, the DEA reported significant increases in xylazine-positive deaths.[9] According to the CDC's current State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS) data, xylazine was present in overdoses in 12.2% of overdoses, a significant increase from 2019.[10] It also continues to be trafficked into the United States.

According to the DEA's Joint Intelligence National Threat Response – El Paso Illicit Drug (INTREPID) Lab (Lab), only 15% of various xylazine adulterated fentanyl samples tested by the Lab contained markers to xylazine repurposed for veterinary preparation.[11] Thus the vast majority of xylazine adulterated fentanyl samples are from powdered sources and smuggled into the U.S.[12] Given the relatively low price of xylazine, the DEA has warned that xylazine's use as an adulterant for other illicit drugs is increasing profits for traffickers.[13] The increase in deaths caused the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to attempt to restrict the unlawful importation of xylazine and restrict importation and distribution to legitimate veterinary use

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[3] *DEA Reports Widespread Threat of Fentanyl Mixed with Xylazine*, DEA [hereinafter DEA Public Safety Alert], www.dea.gov/alert/dea-reports-widespread-threat-fentanyl-mixed-xylazine.
[4] DEA Joint Intelligence Report, *supra* note 2.
[5] Mbabazi Kariisa et al., *Notes from the Field: Xylazine Detection and Involvement in Drug Overdose Deaths – United States, 2019*, CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Sept. 17, 2021, https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7037a4.htm.
[6] *Xylazine*, Nat'l Inst. on Drug Abuse, Nat'l Insts. of Health, https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/xylazine.
[7] Query on Jan. 5. 2026 from DEA, Diversion Control Division, National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) Data Query System, https://www.nflis.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/dqs-main.xhtml.
[8] DEA Joint Intelligence Report, *supra* note 2.
[9] *Id.*
[10] *CDC State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System,* https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/data-research/facts-stats/sudors-dashboard-fatal-overdose-data.html. The reporting includes data from 42 states and District of Columbia.
[11] *Xylazine Information, DEA,* https://www.dea.gov/xylazine-information.
[12] *Id.*
[13] DEA Joint Intelligence Report, *supra* note 2.

in the United States.[14] Federal authorities encounter xylazine in connection with fentanyl being trafficked from Mexico by the Sinaloa and Jalisco Cartels using chemicals sourced from China.[15] Just this past September, the Treasury Department sanctioned Guangzhou Tengyue Chemical Co., Ltd (Guangzhou Tengyue), a Chinese chemical manufacturer.[16] The Department of Justice also obtained indictments against Guangzhou Tengyue and related entities for trafficking synthesized drugs and xylazine.[17]

Many states have scheduled xylazine under their controlled substances law, though classifications vary. Nevertheless, we agree that Congress must act quickly to classify the illicit use of xylazine under Schedule III of the federal Controlled Substances Act. The Combating Illicit Xylazine Act provides critical tools that will enable the DEA to track its manufacturing, prevent diversion, and mandate analysis and reporting on the illicit use of xylazine.

The undersigned Attorneys General have a longstanding commitment to helping our communities recover from the opioid epidemic. For years, we have stood on the front line in the fight to end the opioid epidemic. We successfully pursued accountability from opioid manufacturers, distributors, dispensers, and others in the opioid supply chain for their role in unleashing this epidemic. In addition to the critical injunctive relief imposed upon these companies, billions of dollars are flowing to communities across the country to abate the epidemic. However, the evolving threat of opioids now requires us to confront the threat imposed by the use of xylazine. With the stubbornly high number of opioid overdose deaths, we must address this emerging challenge. The Combating Illicit Xylazine Act provides those much-needed tools and resources. As the Attorneys General of our respective States, we urge you to pass S. 545/ H.R. 1266 without delay.

The four co-sponsors of this letter—Arkansas, Connecticut, New York, and Tennessee—are joined by the undersigned states' attorneys general.

Sincerely,

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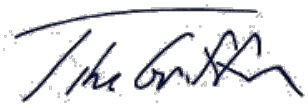
[14] Press Release, FDA, FDA Takes Action to Restrict Unlawful import of Xylazine (Feb. 28, 2023), https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-takes-action-restrict-unlawful-import-xylazine.
[15] DEA Reports Widespread Threat of Fentanyl Mixed with Xylazine, DEA, https://www.dea.gov/alert/dea-reports-widespread-threat-fentanyl-mixed-xylazine.
[16] Press Release, U.S. Dept. of Treasury, Treasury Sanctions China-Based Chemical Company to Combat Synthetic Opioid Trafficking (Sept. 3, 2025), https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0235.
[17] Press Release, U.S. Dept. of Justice, China-Based Chemical Manufacturing Companies and Employees Indicted for Alleged Fentanyl Manufacturing and Distribution (Oct. 24, 2024), https://www.justice.gov/usao-mdfl/pr/china-based-chemical-manufacturing-companies-and-employees-indicted-alleged-fentanyl-0.



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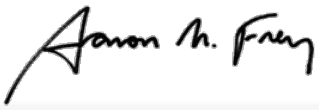

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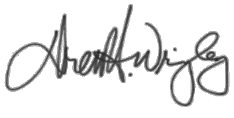

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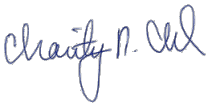

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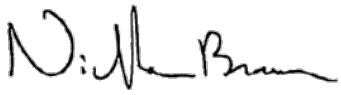

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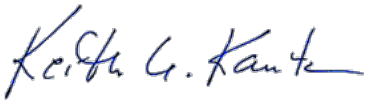

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