

The Cost of... THE FENTANYL EPIDEMIC

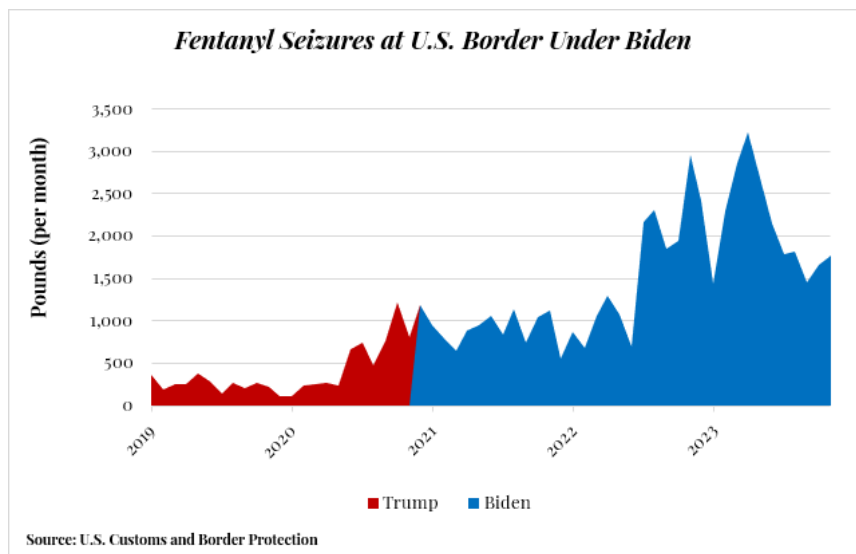
PRESENTING THE PROBLEM

The House Budget Committee's *The Cost Of...* breaks down the fiscal impact of Washington policies, giving context and analysis to how legislative and executive branch actions influence our exploding national debt, which now exceeds \$34 trillion.

The Cost of... The Fentanyl Epidemic analyzes the multifaceted costs and consequences of the deadly fentanyl flooding across our [open southern border](#) while the White House and Department of Homeland Security stand by and watch.

[Fentanyl](#) is a synthetic opioid up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. A single pound of fentanyl is enough to kill over 216 thousand people.

Since Biden took office in January of 2021, over [54,366 pounds of fentanyl](#) have been intercepted crossing American borders—**that's more than enough fentanyl to kill the entire human population on planet earth**, and it's not even the full picture. Federal officials estimate they are **only intercepting 5-10 percent smuggled across the border**. The other 90-95 percent slips past border patrol and floods communities across our nation.



President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas' open border policies enable the flow of illicit fentanyl. It comes at a tremendous cost.

COUNTING THE COST

By The Numbers

The fentanyl epidemic plaguing our nation directly caused by President Biden and [Secretary Mayorkas'](#) reckless open border and pro-cartel policies have manufactured not only a White House-endorsed health and human crisis, but an economic and budgetary crisis as well, costing taxpayers billions annually.



In addition to the rising and incomparable human cost of the crisis, bipartisan experts agree that fentanyl and opioid abuse have had disastrous effects on America's economy and federal spending, forcing taxpayers to pick up the tab for [President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas's radical policies](#).

Per the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO), "**the opioid crisis has affected the federal budget by affecting spending and revenues**, although the exact size of the effect is unknown. Federal spending has increased because federally subsidized health insurance—including Medicare, Medicaid, and private health insurance obtained from employers or purchased through the marketplaces—has funded prescription opioids, treatment of patients with OUD, and overdose reversal drugs, for example. The opioid crisis also has increased federal spending on the child welfare system and means-tested social programs, including cash assistance and disability programs."

[According](#) to Congress' Joint Economic Committee (JEC), the opioid epidemic cost the United States nearly \$1.5 trillion in 2020, in both direct costs and indirect effects such as lost economic output. JEC expects the cost of the crisis to have only grown since then, as the latest data indicates President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas' policies have resulted in an [over 33 percent](#) uptick in synthetic opioid related deaths since August 2020.

CDC reports that, in 2023, the overdose death rate topped 112,000 in a 12-month period for the first time in U.S. history. These record-breaking numbers are not only shameful, but they are inextricably linked to the overwhelming volume of dangerous illicit drugs that the White House has allowed to flow through the southern border—costing Americans not only their blood, but their treasure too.

The Human Cost of the Crisis:

A [House Homeland Security Committee hearing](#) in September 2023 saw several Americans from all walks of life testify before the Committee on the human cost of the Biden Administration's open border policies, including Sandy Snodgrass of Alaska, a mother who lost her 22-year old son to fentanyl poisoning. She shared the following testimony:

My only child, Robert Bruce Snodgrass, became forever 22 on October 26th, 2021, in Anchorage Alaska. He was poisoned by fentanyl on the cold October day in a wooded area within shouting distance of a McDonald's drive through. The fentanyl he got that day prevented him from being able to call out for help. He dropped and died where he stood. Bruce loved Alaska, he was an outdoorsman, a free solo climber and wilderness survival expert. He was safe in the backcountry of Alaska. He was not safe in his own hometown. The year Bruce died Alaska was number one in the nation for increased illicit drug deaths. The 73 percent increase [in deaths] was fueled by fentanyl. In the first 6 months of 2023, enough fentanyl was seized in Alaska to kill every Alaskan three times.



Bruce Snodgrass, victim of the fentanyl epidemic



If the Biden Administration's manufactured crisis cost the life of one American or caused the plight of one mother, it would be enough to warrant action. But it hasn't. Fentanyl has cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of Americans [since President Biden opened the southern border](#). It has destroyed hundreds of thousands of families, and it will continue to wreak havoc on families and communities in our nation every day until we change course.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The cartels are reaping the benefits of a disorderly and weak American Administration.

Next week, the world will watch as [House Homeland Security Committee members debate the impeachment of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas](#), one of the capital conspirators of the Biden border crisis. Budget Members urge Congress and the American people to keep the cost of the fentanyl epidemic at the top of their minds and at the forefront of this critical conversation.

If our leaders will not change course, we must change who leads the response to this crisis.

House Republicans have been leading the charge to respond to the fentanyl crisis and hold President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas accountable. The House boldly passed H.R. 2, the Secure the Border Act of 2023 which, if enacted, would be the most substantial immigration and border security package in a generation. This package included commonsense policies to halt the flow of illegal immigrants and strengthen our processes at the border to ensure lasting safety and order. These provisions included:

- Restarting construction of physical barriers including the border wall
- Immediately increasing the number of Border Patrol Agents on the ground
- Deploying modern technology including drones, sensors, and sophisticated screening equipment
- Ending catch and release
- Protecting unaccompanied children from being trafficked by the cartels
- Streamline the asylum process to prevent abuse

In addition to H.R. 2, the House Budget Committee's FY 2024 "Reverse the Curse" [Budget Resolution](#) included a policy statement calling upon members of Congress to advance bipartisan policies to comprehensively respond to the opioid epidemic and secure the border to prevent fentanyl from reaching the United States.

In December, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the bipartisan Support for Patients and Communities (SUPPORT) [Reauthorization Act](#) to continue providing critical resources to American individuals and communities affected by the fentanyl crisis, including by opioid use disorder prevention, recovery, and treatment programs that save lives.

