



US SENATE

Dear Senators,

My name is Mia Gonzalez and I am enthusiastic about serving as your Director for the United States Senate in the upcoming CancunMUN 2024. I'm a 17 year old senior at the International American School Of Cancun. In my free time I like to paint, play soccer, and spend time with my friends and family. In the future when I graduate I intend to study either interior design or finances with an open minded perspective on pursuing these goals whether in the United States, Canada or Mexico.

This would be my fourth MUN conference, a journey that commenced since middle school. In the past I was a delegate in the World Health Organization of CancunMUN 2022 and also in the United States Senate of CancunMUN 2023. Both experiences have been exciting and challenging.

This year I'm committed to make this conference unforgettable and for all my Senators to engage in their positions. I expect everyone to be comfortable and confident in their arguments. To achieve this, thorough preparation is imperative. While the background guide serves as a valuable resource, I encourage everyone to have other sources of information. Let's ensure that we have professionalism but most importantly, fun.

I am looking forward to meeting all of you and if you have any questions don't be afraid to contact me at, gonzalez.m@ciac.edu.mx.

Mia Gonzalez, Director
United States Senate

Welcome Senators!

My name is Alina Sobotovych, I hold a high regard for being your Moderator in the US Senate of CancunMUN 2024. I am a 16 years old junior attending the International American School of Cancun. In my free time I entertain myself by reading, shopping, watching movies and spending time with my friends and family. Later on after I graduate in 2026, I will be studying law in the United States after my bachelors degree.

This would be my third MUN conference. I was a delegate in the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime of CancunMUN 2023 and as well in the previous year I was a delegate in The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice of CancunMUN 2022. I had great experiences being part of these conferences.

My goal is to create a healthy, comfortable, professional and competitive environment in this committee. Take into account that your background guide should not be your only source of information. I expect all the senators attending this conference to be well informed, well prepared, well mannered and confident. I am looking forward to seeing all of the senators debating in this conference.

I am so very delighted to be working with all of you. If any of you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me at alina.sobotovych@ciac.edu.mx I wish you the best of luck senators!

Alina Sobotovych, Moderator
United States Senate



COMMITTEE MISSION

The United States Senate was established in 1788 to serve as the country's legislative body. Under a form of governance intended to grant more authority to the federal government, the Senate defends the rights of different states and the minority viewpoint. A nominee may get the advice or consent of the Senate. There are two senators per state; they are either Democrat, Independent, or Republican. There can also be independent Senators. In total, there are 100 representatives in the Senate. These Senators are responsible for passing legislation and settling disputes between the parties.





Topic A:

Combating the Fentanyl Crisis


Introduction

Fentanyl, including other opioids, is fueling one of the worst opioid crises in the history of the United States. Per week more than 1,500 Americans die due to their amount of intake of Fentanyl leading to one of the worst causes of fatal overdose in the country. The extremely lethal synthetic opioid is largely mass-produced in China and Mexico, and later trafficked into the United States. Fentanyl is also legally manufactured and distributed around the United States. Pharmacies sell legal Fentanyl products for the need of painkillers or prescriptions. The use of Fentanyl is diverted by theft, fraudulent prescriptions, and illicit distribution by patients, physicians, and pharmacists. Small doses of fentanyl and similar synthetic opioids can be smuggled due to their potency. They were mostly made in Chinese labs and imported into the nation when they initially started to have a significant influence in the United States, which was approximately ten years ago.

Combating the Fentanyl Crisis has been on the agenda for quite a while in the United States Senate. The Republicans blame Joe Biden's management for the seizures of Fentanyl at the US's southwestern frontier. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) states that if the scale of seizures continues at this rate, they will confiscate enough Fentanyl to kill 1 billion people. Republicans claim that increasing seizures of fentanyl are evidence of increased smuggling and believe that the migrants are the cause of the smuggling of Fentanyl into the United States while Democrats disagree.

History

The illicit use of opioids was developed in the 1910s in the United States. Over the past two decades, the United States has experienced a large increase in drug abuse and addiction causing one's demise from an overdose. In the mid-nineties, the popularity of Oxycontin was due to the aggressive marketing of Purdue Pharmaceutical which promised relief of pain with no side effects. However, the marketing promises were unsubstantiated resulting in long-term addiction and other health side effects upon the individuals in use of Oxycontin. The decline in the use of Oxycontin led to a mass of addicts exceedingly taking over the streets with high demands for heroin.



Leading to the manufacturing of a new analgesic drug. Fentanyl was first developed by Dr. Paul Janssen in 1959 under a license held by his company Janssen Pharmaceutica. It was introduced to the public in the 1960s as a sedative and an anesthetic, quickly approved in the medical environment. Fentanyl was first presented in 1968 to the United States. The deadliest wave of the Opioid Epidemic began in 2013. With a rapid rise of overdose with the use of synthetic opioids, including illegally mass-produced Fentanyl.

The Senator of Pennsylvania, Bob Casey, cosponsored the Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 2013. This would create stricter training standards before medical professionals could prescribe methadone and opioids, start consumer education campaigns about opioid use, and mandate thorough reporting of deaths linked to opioid use. In 2014, Senator Casey requested assistance from the United States Drug Enforcement Administration for the Pennsylvania law enforcement to investigate the Fentanyl tainted with heroin that killed 22 people.





Current Situation

Fentanyl has killed American citizens -between 18 to 49 years old- more than any other public health conflict in the United States, the death rates are approximately 300 individuals in America daily. In over half of the overdoses in the United States Fentanyl has been involved since 2019. By 2022 it was the cause of practically 70% of drug overdose deaths. Fentanyl death rates have increased for every past decade without end.

The Biden Administration strives to counteract the illicit Fentanyl distribution within the United States. The Federal regulators implemented new limits on Fentanyl prescriptions and elevated their focus on overrunning fentanyl while raising public awareness of the drug's lethality. The Drug Enforcement Administration issued a public alert about fake prescription medications laced with fentanyl and found twice as much fentanyl as it had the year before. To improve the harm of drugs, in March 2023, the Food and Drug Administration approved the naloxone nasal spray Narcan as the primary over-the-counter drug to reverse the effects of Fentanyl. The sale of Narcan in public pharmacies ameliorated the efforts of combating the dangerous epidemic.

The efforts to combat the Fentanyl crisis have led to an increase in cooperation between the Republicans and Democrats. The House of Republicans has regularly spoken about the smuggling of Fentanyl across the US-Mexican border including the migration issues. The Republican party presidential debates have at least one candidate discuss the calling for military involvement to combat Mexican cartels. The Republicans believe that the Biden administration isn't doing enough to stop the Mexican cartels and the Fentanyl trafficking into the United States.



Points to Consider

- What is your senator, state, and party's point of view on this topic?
- What is the situation with Fentanyl in your State?
- What has the governor done to improve the Fentanyl Crisis within your State?
- Does your State provide Fentanyl without a prescription?
- Is it necessary to enforce the laws including the involvement of Fentanyl?

Useful links

https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Fentanyl-2020_0.pdf

<https://www.cfr.org/background/fentanyl-and-us-opioid-epidemic#:~:text=Introduction,fatal%20overdoses%20in%20the%20country.>



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"Domestic and International Dimensions of the U.S. Fentanyl Crisis." *United States Department of State*, www.state.gov/briefings-foreign-press-centers/domestic-and-international-dimensions-of-the-us-fentanyl-crisis#:~:text=So%20last%20year%20some%2070%2C000. Accessed 28 Feb. 2024.

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"Senator Casey's Work Fighting the Opioid Crisis | U.S. Senator for Pennsylvania." *Www.casey.senate.gov*, www.casey.senate.gov/senator-caseys-work-to-combat-the-opioid-crisis#:~:text=Senator%20Casey%20cosponsored%20the%20bipartisan%20Fentanyl%20Eradication%20and%20Narcotics%20Deterrence Accessed 28 Feb. 2024.

"Understanding the Fentanyl and Opioid Crisis: US-Mexico Solutions | Wilson Center." *Www.wilsoncenter.org*, www.wilsoncenter.org/event/understanding-fentanyl-and-opioid-crisis-us-mexico-solution

Senators box:

Tammy Baldwin

Michael F. Bennet

Cory Booker

John Brasso

Mike Braun

Sherron Brown

Susan Collins

John Cornyn

Ted Cruz

Matt Gaetz

James Lankford

Zoe Lofgren

Lucy McBath

Catherine C. Masto

Mitch McConnell

Joe Manchin

Joe Manchin II

Chris Murphy

Mark Kelly

Anthony Kern

Bob Casey

Kyrsten Sinema

Rick Scott

Tim Scott

Steve Rhoads

Chuck Schumer

Patrick J. Toomey



Topic B: Addressing School Safety Measures And Mass Shootings

Introduction


School shootings are defined as attacks occurring within educational institutions involving the use of firearms. Unfortunately, the United States holds the distinction of having the highest number of school-related shootings, escalating to the severity of mass shootings due to the occurrence of multiple casualties in a short period. Mass shootings in schools have gained attention due to the devastating impact on families, communities, and the security of educational institutions. These incidents result in the loss of innocent lives, severe injuries, and long-lasting trauma for students and teachers. This alarming issue urges the critical need for significant implications, including the implementation of safety measures to ensure the well-being of both students and teachers.

In recent times, both the Republican and Democrat parties have given thorough consideration to this significant issue. The Republicans advocate for enhanced school security and increased access to mental health care for both students and teachers as the solution. On the other hand, Democrats challenge the effectiveness of these safety measures in preventing school mass shootings and assert that the primary focus should be on restricting access to firearm weapons through comprehensive gun control measures, aiming to keep guns out of the hands of potentially dangerous people. The different perspectives have led to a continued delay in reaching an agreement and implementing an effective solution to this problem.

History

School shootings have occurred throughout the history of our country. The earliest known incident took place in 1764 during the Pontiac Rebellion School Massacre, resulting in only three survivors out of the thirteen children. In the 19th century, there were 32 school shootings, but it wasn't until the 20th Century that mass shootings began to escalate, with a total of 340 school shootings.

An example is the Columbine High School Massacre in Colorado on April 20, 1999. A mass shooting where 18-year old Eric Harris and 17-year old Dylan Klebold, took 13 lives, injured 21 people, and ended with their suicide in the library. This shocking event, categorized among the deadliest school mass shootings, led to widespread recognition and a lasting impact on public perception. It led to a nationwide reconsideration of school security measures, with an increased focus on strategies to prevent and address future



incidents. Changes in gun control laws and efforts to address mental health issues were made. Unfortunately, the tragedy also contributed to an increase in school shootings in the 21st century, as it served as inspiration for copycats.

Organizations initiated by family members of victims have risen in multiple states. The Sandy Hook Promise, founded by parents affected by the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, is an example. This organization calls for action, advocating not only for stricter gun control but also comprehensive school safety measures, visualizing a future where children are free from shootings. Also, individual states such as New York, California, Texas, Washington, Florida, and Michigan have implemented legislative measures aiming to enhance school safety by improving security infrastructure and mental health support. The UN has recognized the impact of this issue, but its involvement has mainly focused on promoting international initiatives for safe environments for students.

Despite the implementation of safety and gun control measures, issues such as lack of clear leadership, communication and sufficient urgency to take down the gunman persist in federal law enforcement response to these incidents.





Current Situation

School shootings have reached a high number in 2023 with over 350 school shootings in total, surpassing the previous year's record, 305 in 2022. Even though school shootings keep rising, investments in safety measures have also increased which have resulted in a decrease of school shootings victims from 273 in 2022 to 227 in 2023. Nevertheless, it is still a high number and the frequency of these events urges the implementation of better comprehensive solutions.

Currently, the government has implemented several policies and laws to address this issue. An example is the adoption of Extreme Risk Laws, also known as Red Flag Laws. These legal measures allow authorities to temporarily restrict an individual's access to firearms if person is identified as a potential danger, posing a significant risk to himself or others. The purpose is to provide a solution for people in crisis times, offering the help they need and keeping them from harming themselves or others. This law has been taken into action by 19 states, including California, Illinois, and Colorado. However, many gun laws have become a slate of lawsuits from pro-gun groups across several states, by challenging the legislation through courts, relying on the Supreme Court.

Points to Consider:

- What is your senator's, state's, and party's point of view on the topic?
- How has your state's senator actively contributed to addressing and resolving the current issue?
- What factors contribute to the frequency of this problem?
- How efficient are current school security measures and how can they be improved?
- What other strategies can be implemented?

Useful links:

<https://icjia.illinois.gov/researchhub/articles/exploring-school-violence-and-safety-concerns>

<http://www.arizonalawreview.org/pdf/57-2/57arizlrev523.pdf>



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<https://everytownresearch.org/report/how-can-we-prevent-gun-violence-in-schools/>

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<https://www.cnbc.com/2022/05/29/republicans-democrats-spar-over-gun-regulation-after-texas-school-shooting.html>

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<https://operationalsupport.un.org/en/unicef-urges-leaders-to-keep-schools-safe-following-deadly-texas-shooting>

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<https://www.cbsnews.com/texas/news/report-frequency-school-shootings-increased-dramatically-since-columbine/>

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