



NEWS RELEASE

Attorney General Mike Hilgers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Attorney General Hilgers Urges Biden Administration to Designate Mexican Drug Cartels as Foreign Terrorist Organizations

Lincoln- Attorney General Mike Hilgers joined a coalition of 21 states, led by Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares, calling on President Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken to designate Mexican drug cartels as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) under federal law. Doing so will free up resources to confront the deadly opioid crisis with the seriousness it deserves.

The opioid crisis has affected every state, county, city, town, and community in the United States. Last year, the DEA reported more than 100,000 Americans died from drug overdoses—and synthetic opioids like fentanyl were responsible for more than half. In the letter sent today, Attorney General Hilgers explains that the U.S. Government knows precisely how this poison is entering our country. Cartels like the Sinaloa cartel and Cartel Jalisco New Generation import raw materials from China, use them to produce deadly synthetic opioids at low cost, and traffic those poisons across the southwestern border and into our communities. Between October 2021 and June 2022, U.S. Customs and Border Protection seized 8,425 pounds of fentanyl smuggled into the United States. These cartels are doing much more than just smuggling poison into the United States. They are assassinating rivals and government officials, ambushing and killing Americans at the border, and engaging in an armed insurgency against the Mexican Government.

In Nebraska, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Omaha Division seized approximately 32,000 fake pills in Omaha, some laced with lethal doses of fentanyl, in a two-day span this past summer. During the first six months of 2022, DEA investigators seized approximately 151,500 pills in Nebraska, marking an 83 percent increase over the 82,775 pills seized in all of 2021.

Designating major cartels as Foreign Terrorist Organizations will give state and federal law enforcement agencies increased authority to freeze cartel assets, deny entry to cartel members, and allow prosecutors to pursue stricter punishments against those who provide them material support.

Nebraska joined the following states: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and West Virginia.

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