

Hello,

As a scientist and writer, I am against blanket class bans such as the amendments being proposed for cathinones, synthetic cannabinoids and fentanyl. Not only does this hamper research into compounds which are often medically useful, it criminalizes based on fear instead of science.

It's clear that prohibition and criminalization do little to mitigate demand and, to steal a line from Jimmy Carter, penalties of this nature usually destroy lives with far greater efficacy than the use of the drugs themselves. Harm reduction programs and treatment options do far more for the greater good than locking up people who might have a very good reason for using these substances.

The ban on cathinones made this very clear. The first drugs to hit the street were rather well-known to science and to the drug using community - but then the bans of those first substances pushed the market towards using lesser known substances that appear to have more side effects and dangers. From anyone who has spent time on the street gathering anecdotal evidence during the cathinone frenzy, it's clear that the ban made things more dangerous for people.

I would encourage the committee to not use an analog law as a hammer to knock huge swathes of useful and used substances into the black markets where they will continue to thrive despite the lack of general safety precautions that exists there.

Thank you.

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