

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

September 12, 2024

The Honorable Anthony J. Blinken  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C St., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

I am writing to express my strong support for continued diplomatic efforts to urge the People's Republic of China's cooperation on efforts to crack down on the flow of illicit fentanyl to the U.S. and elsewhere in the world. Fentanyl has wreaked havoc in New York and across America, and despite our ongoing efforts, companies in China continue to fuel this crisis by illicitly selling precursor chemicals to buyers in places like Mexico, where it is manufactured and illegally shipped to our most vulnerable communities.

Nearly a year ago I led a bipartisan Senate delegation to China and met with President Xi and several other high-ranking PRC officials to candidly discuss, among other priorities, the need for China to take much more aggressive action to stop fentanyl precursor chemicals from fueling the fentanyl crisis in America. I am pleased that following our Senate delegation, and thanks to the Biden-Harris Administration's continued constructive engagement, the PRC has taken some initial steps to address our concerns.

For example, soon after our Congressional Delegation, President Biden, citing the delegation's efforts, announced a new deal on U.S.-China fentanyl cooperation. This progress included launching the U.S.-PRC Counternarcotics Working Group to bolster law enforcement and information sharing, something our Congressional Delegation had specifically called for. Additionally, the PRC issued a notice to its chemical companies against illicit trade in precursor chemicals and pill press equipment, a key action to enforce its own regulation against illegal trade of these products. In June 2024, the PRC also took a joint law enforcement action with the U.S. and arrested fugitives named in the U.S. Justice Department "Operation Fortune Runner" indictment. Finally, the PRC has also taken three actions to bring under regulatory and legal control some fentanyl precursor chemicals, along with synthetic drugs harming Americans.

While these initial steps are welcomed, they fall short of meeting the request of our Congressional Delegation to President Xi that the PRC take responsibility for cutting off the flow of deadly chemicals that are poisoning and killing Americans every day. It is clear that sustained diplomatic and economic pressure and communication with the PRC remains an utmost necessity to hold the PRC further accountable in addressing this crisis.

**Therefore, I strongly urge you to work across the interagency to push the PRC to take the following additional steps:**

1. Take additional law enforcement actions to exert sustained pressure that cracks down on Chinese companies, online marketplaces, and individuals who are involved in illicit

precursor chemical and fentanyl trade and publicly announce the results of these actions. Such action is critical to deterring this type of activity that is already deemed illegal by the PRC. I have no doubt that the PRC can act swiftly to enforce its own law if there is a real commitment to addressing this crisis.

2. Take additional steps domestically to schedule the main precursor chemicals involved in the production of illicit fentanyl. While the PRC has taken some positive steps as previously mentioned, there are significant gaps in the scheduling of precursor chemicals that have been scheduled at the international level.
3. Crack down on money laundering and underground banks used to move illicit profits as part of the illicit fentanyl trade. Recent action by the U.S Department of Justice against underground banking networks in China, and operating globally, demonstrates the need for increased efforts from the PRC to restrict these illicit financial networks and banks that seek to evade PRC laws.

Absent progress with the PRC on these steps, I urge you to maintain the designation of the PRC as a Major Drug Transit or Major Illicit Drug Producing country for Fiscal year 2025.

Once again, I strongly urge you to continue to work with urgency and commitment to push the PRC to take these decisive and meaningful steps to curb the fentanyl crisis as Congress simultaneously continue to assess our legislative options. I look forward to continuing to work together to disrupt the supply of illicit fentanyl, tackle the broader synthetic drug crisis, and save lives in the United States.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator

CC:

Merrick B. Garland  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice

Dr. Rahul Gupta  
Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy  
Executive Office of the President of the United States