



Talent-Feinstein Urge Senate To Move Quickly On Anti-Meth Bill

New Study Shows Meth Is No. 1 Problem in Counties Across the Country
July 11, 2005

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senators Jim Talent (R-Mo.) and Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today said a new study issued by the **National Association of Counties (NACo)** in which the methamphetamine epidemic was cited as the No. 1 problem in a majority of American counties demonstrates the need to pass sweeping anti-meth legislation. The NACo surveyed 500 county law enforcement agencies located in 45 states and nearly 60 percent of counties reported that meth is their largest drug problem.

Talent and Feinstein said the study underscores the need to pass their bipartisan legislation, the Combat Meth Act, to relocate pseudoephedrine – the primary ingredient for meth – behind the counter and provide law enforcement with new resources to go after the meth cooks.

“Senator Feinstein and I have the dubious distinction of representing the two states that lead the country in the production of meth, but this study shows that meth is a big problem virtually everywhere,” Senator Talent said. **“As more states pass laws limiting the sale of pseudoephedrine, it is pushing the meth cooks across state lines and into places that may not yet have a large meth problem. We are urging senators to take action and support the Talent-Feinstein Combat Meth Act. Our legislation would enact the toughest anti-meth law in the country so we can finally get ahead of the meth cooks and keep this terrible drug out of our neighborhoods and schools.”**

“Sheriffs across the country have spoken loud and clear that methamphetamine abuse is the nation’s leading drug problem,” Senator Feinstein said. **“That’s why we’re working to move a bill through the Senate Judiciary Committee that would make a major dent in the fight against meth. It would move cold medicines containing pseudoephedrine behind the counter. It would limit the amount one person could buy in a month to 7.5 grams. And it would provide \$43 million to help local law enforcement come to grips with meth. Given the coming Supreme Court nomination hearings, it is absolutely critical that the Senate Judiciary Committee move quickly and give a helping hand to the sheriffs on the front lines in the battle against meth.”**

The NACo survey, “The Criminal Effect of Meth On Communities,” found that the methamphetamine epidemic in the United States, which began in the West and is moving East, is having a devastating effect on our country. The increasingly widespread production, distribution and use of meth are now affecting urban, suburban and rural communities nationwide.

The survey said 87 percent of law enforcement agencies reported increases in meth related arrests starting three years ago. Fifty percent of the counties surveyed estimated that 1 in 5 of their current jail inmates were housed because of meth related crimes. Seventeen percent of the counties indicate that more than half of their jail populations are incarcerated because of meth related crimes. (*National Association of Counties Website, <http://www.naco.org>*)

The Upper Midwest, Southwest and the Northwest regions reported a 93 percent in meth-related arrests over the past five years. In that period, seventeen states reported a 100 percent increase. California reported a 100 percent increase over the past three years and Missouri reported a 95 percent increase over the past five years.

The NACo also urged the Administration to take a more active role in supporting federal initiatives that would help fight domestic methamphetamine production. Senators Talent and Feinstein have been working with the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Office of National Drug Control Policy, but to date they have not taken a position on the Combat Meth Act.

The NACo also released an additional survey, “The Impact of Meth on Children,” which found that meth is a major cause of child abuse and neglect. Forty percent of all child welfare officials report increased out of home placements because of meth in the last year. During the past five years, 71 percent of the responding counties in California reported an increase in out of home placements because of meth and 70 percent of counties in Colorado reported an increase over the same time period. County child welfare officials were asked if the particular nature of the meth user parent has increased the difficulty of family reunification and 59 percent said yes.

Senators Talent and Feinstein recently announced their enhanced Combat Meth Act that continues to place strict limitations on pseudoephedrine products while ensuring that legitimate consumers continue to have access to cold medicines.

Key Components of the Combat Meth Act:

- **Moves cold medicines containing pseudoephedrine behind the counter** – Amends the Controlled Substances Act to appropriately limit the sale of medicines containing pseudoephedrine by placing them behind the counter and sets a limit on how much of such medicines one person can buy in a month – 7.5 grams.
- **Requires signature and identification for purchases** – The Attorney General will develop regulations to ensure uniformity.
- **Creates alternate procedures for stores without pharmacies and stores in rural areas** – The Drug Enforcement Administration and States will develop regulations to continue to allow cold medicine to be sold at retail stores without pharmacies and in rural areas (but which meet appropriate security criteria), consistent with the intent of the bill to limit access to pseudoephedrine.
- **Creates an airport exemption** – Allows retail facilities located within a commercial airport to sell cold medicine with pseudoephedrine (in liquid form or gel caps) in single packages containing no more than 360 milligrams in a 24-hour period and requires them to follow the log book procedures established by the bill.

- **Sets a national standard** – But allows states to determine appropriate penalties.
- **Effective Date** – Cold medicines containing pseudoephedrine must be moved behind the counter within 6 months of enactment.
- **Creates a national Meth treatment center** – To research effective treatments for Meth abuse.
- **Authorizes \$43 million for enforcement, training, and research into treatment** – This includes:

\$25,000,000 for local law enforcement and federal prosecutors to bring meth manufacturers and dealers to justice

\$3,000,000 for meth treatment and research

\$5,000,000 to help children who have been affected by meth

\$10,000,000 for precursor monitoring grants

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