

**U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell**  
**Longview Fentanyl Roundtable**  
**February 16, 2024**

**Sen. Cantwell:** Thank you, Kris, and thank you for helping us host the forum and helping provide leadership here. And Commissioner Weber thank you so much.

It seems like yesterday that we were here having a meth task force and how we were going to fight meth in our state. We were pretty successful, except that we pushed a lot of it right into Oregon is really what we did. And we cut the head off of the dragon and it just came back bigger. Right? And that's what it feels like to keep facing.

I want to thank the Chairwoman for being here too, because, you know, we've seen all throughout Indian country that some of the most impacted places [have] been on our tribal reservations where there may not be as much law enforcement. We had the horrible incident of five people in one week dying on the Lummi Reservation. And we had to get the FBI and go up and help because there was a huge drug supply right there on the reservation that they haven't been able to move out, but we needed that coordinated effort to help them.

And so that's what we're trying to do, get more resources federally, but also listen to the communities, to law enforcement, to health care providers, to those who've been affected themselves and what do they think will work.

And so, we have been doing this around our state and every time we do it, we are something new and important. So that's why we're going to keep doing it, but we have been fighting for the last several months to try to get the FEND Off Fentanyl Act passed in Congress.

This is a really important piece of legislation because it helps us fight the actual drug cartels that are moving so much product into our country that allows them to attach their assets and get revenue that we can use in law enforcement to go back and attack the problem.

And it also has support for more effort at our borders because we are finding -- I don't know if you saw this story in Seattle about a big semi-trailer truck, but basically they're moving vast amounts of supply through various aspects of our transportation system, both air and truck and we need to get the tools to our CBP and others to help stop the flow of that product. So we're, we're working very diligently on that.

So the FEND Off Fentanyl Act was passed out of the Senate in a piece of bipartisan legislation and then got dropped, and now we just passed it again. So I hope that this time that we'll get the support in the House of Representatives and get it passed because we have to disrupt the illicit flow of fentanyl in our country. We have to.

And you may have seen that the President asked with the visit with President Xi several months ago in San Francisco, that they do a better job in stopping the transfer of the base product that is used in creating fentanyl and better track that. So we need we need this aggressive effort. We need to stop the money laundering that's helping them. We need to be able to track the cartels, seize their assets, and do a good job.

I'm also the co-sponsor of the TRANQ Research Act to expand research and testing on TRANQ and xylazine, and the other things that are dangerously connected to fentanyl. But we've just lost too many people, and you know in King County we lost we lost 1000 people last year. That's 1,000 people in King County.

I think your numbers here --- overdose deaths increased by 950%, so I don't have the exact number of people but that was a huge increase. So we want to do everything we can to listen today. Obviously, the price of a deadly fentanyl pill has dropped so much, that's why it's out there and that's why the supply they just keep pushing it. And as one of the most impacted states we need to do everything we can.

We're also pushing right now, and we've had some good help with this proposal, it's called the Cantwell-Young bill, it is to significantly increase the availability of affordable housing. It's the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program and hopefully we're going to get it passed in the next few weeks and will help build 200,000 units nationwide, but about 7000 more units in our state. And we really want to see that put into action.

We just don't have enough affordable places for people to live. Somebody already mentioned that how this goes hand in hand, and we realize that, and so we're working very hard. But thanks so much for being here today. I really look forward to hearing what people have to say.