



Senate Judiciary Committee Approves Feinstein-Talent Anti-Meth Bill July 28, 2005

Washington, DC – The Senate Judiciary Committee today unanimously approved legislation by Senators Jim Talent (R-MO) and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) to limit access to cold medicines containing pseudoephedrine, the primary ingredient used to make methamphetamine.

The legislation would move cold medicines containing pseudoephedrine behind the pharmacy counter and limit how much one person can buy to 7.5 grams a month. It is modeled after the successful Oklahoma law that resulted in an immediate 80 percent drop in meth labs seized.

“This is a tremendous victory as we work to enact the toughest anti-meth law in the country,” said U.S. Senator Jim Talent. **“Our bill would strengthen anti-meth laws passed in other states and apply the toughest standard in the country to restrict the sale of products with pseudoephedrine so we can finally get ahead of the meth cooks and keep this terrible drug out of our neighborhoods and schools.”**

“Today is a good day in the fight against methamphetamines,” Senator Feinstein said. **“We’re one step closer to enacting a national meth bill that would put thousands of meth labs out of business. The bill approved today is a strong standard, but also gives States the flexibility to tighten those standards if they choose. We will continue to work on this legislation to ensure that it can be effectively implemented and meets the needs of law enforcement.”**

“Finally, I think today's action sends a clear signal to the pharmaceutical industry that alternatives to pseudoephedrine should be found. This is not an idle dream - companies sell cold medications in Europe without pseudoephedrine, and the same could be true here.”

The Committee approved the bill after amendments by Senators Tom Coburn (R-OK) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT) were incorporated:

- Senator Coburn’s amendment allows states (or political subdivisions) to go above what the combat meth act will require, such as making cold products containing pseudoephedrine prescription only.
- Senator Hatch’s amendment requires that cold medicines in which pseudoephedrine is the only active ingredient be moved behind the counter within 90 days of the bill’s enactment and medicine with pseudoephedrine and other active ingredients must be moved behind the counter by January 1, 2007

Senators Talent and Feinstein first introduced the Combat Meth Act in January 2005. Since that time, they have worked with law enforcement, retailers, and consumers to develop strengthened legislation that continues to place strict limitations on pseudoephedrine products while ensuring that legitimate consumers continue to have access to cold medicines.

The bill:

- 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.
- Establishes a uniform federal standard that strengthens all existing state laws.
- 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
 - \$13,000,000 for meth treatment and research
 - \$5,000,000 to help children who have been affected by meth

Background

Methamphetamine is perhaps the most deadly, fiercely addictive and rapidly spreading drug the United States has known. During the past decade, while law enforcement officers continue to bust record numbers of clandestine labs, meth use in communities has increased by as much as 300%. Meth is cheap, potent, and available everywhere.

The continuing proliferation of methamphetamine production continues to put a severe strain on federal and local law enforcement resources. Fighting meth requires a comprehensive approach designed to assist states, local law enforcement and prosecutors to crack down on cooks and traffickers of meth while enhancing community education and awareness and treatment options for those addicted to this dangerous drug.