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REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
ON COMBATTING THE OPIOID CRISIS

Manchester Community College
Manchester, New Hampshire

2:35 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you to our First Lady, Melania, who has been so incredible. (Applause.) Thank you. And we are blessed to have you as our First Lady. Really are.

It's great to be back in the beautiful state of New Hampshire. (Applause.) I don't know if you remember, but this is the first place I came for the primaries. (Applause.) And this is the room right here. So I like this room. This has been a good room.

We're honored to be joined by your wonderful and very talented Governor, Chris Sununu. Chris, thank you. (Applause.) Thank you, Chris. Oh, and there's another talented governor. Governor Sununu, stand up. (Applause.) I have to tell you, there was nobody tougher on Trump at the beginning. (Laughter.) It's true. There was nobody on television tougher. And then we met each other and we liked each other, and he went from the worst to the best. Governor, thank you. (Laughs.) I mean that, too. Thank you.

I want to thank also Attorney General Sessions, and Secretary -- thank you, Jeff. -- (applause) -- Secretary Azar, Secretary Nielsen, and Surgeon General Adams for joining us at this very important event.

The First Lady and I just visited the Manchester Fire Department Safe Station. Talking about it all over the country. The Fire Chief, Dan Goonan, and all of the first responders with us today, thank you. You've been incredible, and you're saving American lives.

We're also joined by a number of law enforcement officers who we love. Our police, DEA, ICE, Border Patrol agents, and Customs officers work night and day to keep drugs out of our communities and criminals off of our streets. (Applause.) So today, we thank you, we honor you, and we want you to know that we will always have your backs 100 percent. Thank you very much, law enforcement. Thank you. (Applause.)

I especially want to acknowledge all of the families with us today who have endured terrible hardships because of the opioid crisis, and especially those who have lost precious loved ones. I've been saying this for a long time, and it all started right here in New Hampshire, because I see what you're going through. About as bad as there is anywhere in the country. And I said I'd be back, and we are back. And we're pouring a lot of money and a lot of talent into this horrible problem. And we pledge to honor the memory of those you lost with action and determination and resolve. We'll get it. We will not rest until the end. And I will tell you, this scourge of drug addiction in America will stop. It will stop. (Applause.)

Every day, 116 Americans die from an opioid-related overdose. In New Hampshire, the overdose, really, death rate -- I mean, can you believe this? The death rate is double the national average. It's got difficulties like people wouldn't believe.

Defeating this epidemic will require the commitment of every state, local, and federal agency. Failure is not an option. Addiction is not our future. We will liberate our country from this crisis. Never been like this. Hundreds of years -- never been like this. And we will raise a drug-free generation of American children.

Last October, we declared the opioid crisis a public health emergency. Should have been done a long time before. Since then, we've worked with Congress to ensure at least 6 billion additional dollars, going through right now, in new funding in 2018 and 2019 to combat the opioid crisis. And we will be spending the most money ever on the opioid crisis. (Applause.)

On our most recent National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, people across the country turned in more than 900,000 pounds of unused or expired prescription drugs -- more than the weight of three Boeing 757s.

Our Customs and Border Protection -- and these people, the job they do is incredible -- seized nearly 1,500 pounds of fentanyl last year, nearly three times the amount seized in 2016. And I told China: Don't send it. (Applause.) And I told Mexico: Don't send it. Don't send it.

In 2017, ICE arrested criminal aliens with 76,000 charges and convictions for dangerous drug crimes.

Last year, the Department of Justice prosecuted more than 3,000 defendants in cases involving opioid, all of the trafficking, and the related crimes -- 3,000 cases -- including a pharmacist, a physician's assistant, and an opioid trafficker, each charged with committing serious drug crimes in New Hampshire.

Whether you are a dealer or doctor or trafficker or a manufacturer, if you break the law and illegally peddle these deadly poisons, we will find you, we will arrest you, and we will hold you accountable. (Applause.) Thank you.

Here in New Hampshire, I applaud all of the Drug Enforcement Agents and law enforcement officers who recently coordinated Operation Granite Shield, an 18-hour enforcement action targeting drug traffickers that resulted in the arrest of 151 people. These are terrible people, and we have to get tough on those people, because we can have all the Blue Ribbon committees we want, but if we don't get tough on the drug dealers, we're wasting our time. Just remember that. We're wasting our time. And that toughness includes the death penalty. (Applause.)

You know, it's an amazing thing. Some of these drug dealers will kill thousands of people during their lifetime -- thousands of people -- and destroy many more lives than that. But they will kill thousands of people during their lifetime, and they'll get caught and they'll get 30 days in jail. Or they'll go away for a year, or they'll be fined. And yet, if you kill one person, you get the death penalty or you go to jail for life.

So if we're not going to get tough on the drug dealers who kills thousands of people and destroy so many people's lives, we are just doing the wrong thing. We have got to get tough. This isn't about nice anymore. This isn't about committees. This isn't about let's get everybody and have dinners, and let's have everybody go to a Blue Ribbon committee and everybody gets a medal for, frankly, talking and doing nothing. This is about winning a very, very tough problem. And if we don't get very tough on these dealers, it's not going to happen, folks. It's not going to happen. And I want to win this battle.

I don't want to leave at the end of seven years and have this problem, okay? (Applause.) I don't want that. Right? Thank you. Not going to happen. Thank you all. A lot of voters in this room. I see that. Thank you. (Applause.) No, we're going to solve this problem. We're going to solve it with brains, we're going to solve it with resolve, and we're going to solve it with toughness. Because toughness is the thing that they most fear. That's what they most fear.

So to the brave agents and officers, thank you for protecting us all.

Last year, my commission on combatting the incredible crisis of opioids issued 56 recommendations. My administration agreed with all of the commission's goals, and we've worked aggressively to put them into action.

Today, I'm here to announce additional steps that we're taking as part of our nationwide initiative to address the opioid crisis, and, by the way, the drug crisis -- the general drug crisis.

First, we're taking action to reduce drug demand by preventing Americans from becoming addicted in the first place. So important. That includes increasing federal funding for the development of non-addictive painkillers. And we have to come up with a solution where we come up with a painkiller that's not so addictive. And we can do it. We're not that far off. We can do it. These things are incredibly addictive. So we're going to find that answer also.

Here with us today are Jim and Jean Mozer. They lost their beautiful son, Adam, to a fentanyl overdose. His addiction began with prescription pills he found in their kitchen cabinet. They have since begun the Zero Left initiative to help families get rid of excess painkillers. Jim and Jean, we're sorry for your loss -- a great boy; he's a great boy -- and we applaud your strength and your leadership. And where are you? Where are you? Come on up. Come on up here. Come on up here. (Applause.) Tell us about your boy.

MS. MOZER: Adam was our oldest son. He was a great kid. He was a smart kid. Grew up out in rural East Kingston, New Hampshire. He had a degree in actuarial science, which, as many of you know, that's the science of forecasting risk.

He was the kind of kid that made you feel really good about yourself. You give him five minutes; you really liked him. And, you know, he just made a bad choice one night. As smart as he was, he found his way into our kitchen cabinet. And, sadly, the rest is history. He got hooked on it, and had to go to the street eventually. And he found fentanyl.

And he's been gone for two-and-a-half years, and we miss him every day. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, darling. You take care of yourself. Okay?

MS. MOZER: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you very much. (Applause.) Thank you. Appreciate it. And so many cases like that.

We're also taking action to prevent addiction by addressing the problem of overprescribing. (Applause.) And our Department of Justice is looking very seriously into bringing major litigation against some of these drug companies. We'll bring it at a federal level. (Applause.) Some states are already bringing it, but we're thinking about bringing it at a very high federal level. And we'll do a job.

We're going to cut nationwide opioid prescriptions by one-third over the next three years. We're also going to make sure that virtually all prescriptions reimbursed by the federal government follow best practices for prescribing. We'll ensure that opioid addiction is not subsidized by the American taxpayer. (Applause.)

The best way -- so important -- and the best way to beat the drug crisis is to keep people from getting hooked on drugs to begin with. As part of that effort -- (applause) -- so important. And this has been something that I've been very strongly in favor of: spending a lot of money on great commercials showing how bad it is, so that kids seeing those commercials during the right shows on television or wherever -- the Internet -- when they see these commercials they -- "I don't want any part of it." That's the least expensive thing we

can do, where you scare them from ending up like the people in the commercials. And we'll make them very, very bad commercials. We'll make them pretty unsavory situations. And you've seen it before, and it's had an impact on smoking and cigarettes. You see what happens to the body; you see what happens to the mind.

So we're announcing a new website, CrisisNextDoor.gov, where Americans can share their stories about the danger of the opioid addiction and addictions.

But we're thinking about doing, really, a largescale rollout of commercials that show how bad it is for the kids. And when they see those commercials, hopefully, they're not going to be going to drugs of any kind - drugs of any kind. And we'll save a lot of lives, and we'll make their life a lot easier.

This epidemic can affect anyone, and that's why we want to educate everyone.

The second part of our initiative is to reduce the supply of illicit drugs. Ninety percent of the heroin in America comes from our southern border, where, eventually, the Democrats will agree with us and we'll build the wall to keep the damn drugs out. (Applause.)

AUDIENCE: Build that wall! Build that wall! Build that wall!

THE PRESIDENT: It's pretty amazing. They don't want to go with DACA, because they don't care about DACA. But they're trying to tie the wall to DACA, and DACA to the wall. And they want to keep DACA for the campaign instead of getting it approved, which we could do very easily. The Republicans are totally in favor of doing something substantial for DACA. But the Democrats like it as a campaign issue, so they don't get it approved. And they want to tie it to the wall, which is okay with me. But both should get approved. They don't want it to be approved. Remember what I said: They don't want it to be approved. They want to make it part of the campaign. Well, we'll make it part of the campaign, also. And we'll win, because we're going to win on those issues. (Applause.)

My administration is also confronting things called "sanctuary cities" that shield dangerous criminals. And every day, sanctuary cities release illegal immigrants and drug dealers, traffickers, and gang members back into our communities. They're protected by these cities. And you say, "What are they doing?" They're safe havens for just some terrible people. Some terrible people. And they're making it very dangerous for our law enforcement officers. You see it all the time.

As the people of New Hampshire have learned firsthand, ending sanctuary cities is crucial to stopping the drug addiction crisis. And your governor, who is great -- the numbers are going down in New Hampshire. I don't know if you've seen it, but the numbers are going down. Chris, we were just -- stand up, Chris. (Applause.) It's really one of the few bright spots where the numbers actually are going down, and that's a tremendous achievement. Thank you, Chris. (Applause.)

According to a recent Dartmouth study, the sanctuary city of Lawrence, Massachusetts is one of the primary sources of fentanyl in six New Hampshire counties. ICE recently arrested 15 MS-13 gang members -- these are not good people, folks. Okay? These are bad, bad people. They don't use guns. They'd rather use knives because it's more painful and it takes longer. These are bad people -- in Boston, Massachusetts, which is a place where you have sanctuary cities.

I'm repeating my call on Congress to block funds for sanctuary cities and to close the deadly loopholes that allow criminals back into our country and into our country in the first place. (Applause.)

You know, some things are very understandable. We have lots of issues where we're on both sides of an issue, and you can understand the other side even though you don't agree. Sanctuary cities are hard to

understand for people because they don't get it. They don't get it. You see what's going on in California, how terrible it is, how dangerous it is. And they're all trying to protect sanctuary cities.

And whether it's Kate Steinle or so many others, they'd be around today if these people weren't allowed back into our country through, in this case, the southern border, at least five times. And look at the damage, and then look at this verdict. Look at the verdict. Can you believe the verdict?

So we have to get a lot smarter. We have to get a lot tougher. And speaking of tough, because here with us today is ICE Agent Derek Dunn. Derek worked with state police to uncover a major drug smuggling operation in Lawrence, Massachusetts. (Applause.) Where's Derek? Derek. Where's Derek? Come here, Derek. I love tough guys. We need tough guys. Come here, Derek. (Applause.)

AGENT DUNN: Just want to say thanks for everyone being here. And it's been a battle. It's been an absolute battle for our counterparts here at DEA and FBI and everybody -- all the law enforcement, state police, and the local police. It's been an absolute battle. We all work together, and we're going to get this solved. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. He didn't know he was going to do that. (Laughter.) And you didn't know you were going to do that. But that's in honor of your boy, right? You made a big impact.

I also want to mention ICE Agent Ron Morin and Manchester Police Detective Patrick Maguire. They helped lead the team that arrested a terrible human trafficker who used opioids to harm, in a very violent way, his victims. Thank you both for bringing the trafficker to a very strong and swift justice.

Where are you guys? Thank you. (Applause.) Stand up, fellas. Thank you. Thank you.

We're also shutting down illegal online marketplaces and preventing drugs that come from China and other countries from bypassing our borders. And we're getting very tough on it. It's not that we have a choice. We don't have a choice. We can be nice, and we can be soft and weak, and you're not going to have a country left. So we have to strengthen up, and strengthen up our laws so that we can do what we have to do. We have to stop this from happening.

Drug traffickers kill so many thousands of our citizens every year. And that's why my Department of Justice will be seeking so many much tougher penalties than we've ever had, and we will be focusing on the penalty that I talked about previously for the big pushers, the ones that are really killing so many people. And that penalty is going to be the death penalty. (Applause.)

If you look at -- if you look at other countries -- I've gotten to know the leaders of many countries. And I won't mention names, but you know the countries I'm talking about. I go around, "How is your drug problem?" "We don't have much of a drug problem." "What do you mean you don't have a drug problem?" "Well, we don't have." I say, how come? "We have zero tolerance for drug dealers." I said, "What does that mean?" "That means we have the death penalty for drug dealers. We don't have a drug problem."

Take a look at some of these countries where they don't play games. They don't have a drug problem. We have court cases that last 10 years, and then they get out at the end. We got to be tough. We have to be smart. We have to change the laws, and we're working on that right now. The Department of Justice is working very, very hard on that.

But the ultimate penalty has to be the death penalty. Now, maybe our country is not ready for that. It's possible -- it's possible that our country is not ready for that. And I can understand it, maybe. Although, personally, I can't understand that. But there are people that are good people, that are strong, smart people, and they would differ with most of us. But I think unless you do that, unless you have

really, really powerful penalties, led by the death penalty for the really bad pushers and abusers, we are going to get nowhere. And I'm telling you, we are going to get somewhere.

Companies must also be held accountable. The Department of Justice recently created a task force to coordinate investigations and lawsuits against manufacturers and other bad actors that harm our citizens.

And I can tell you that Jeff Sessions, who's here with us now, feels so strongly about this. And they're working very hard and very effectively on that, and so we appreciate that very much. Thank you. Thank you, Jeff. (Applause.) Thank you.

I can think of nothing more important. The third part of our initiative is to get lifesaving help to those who need it. We're going to make sure our first responders have access to lifesaving overdose-reversing drugs -- which, by the way, are amazing.

Here with us today is Mike Kelly, the president of Adapt Pharma. Adapt Pharma makes an overdose-reversing drug for opioids, which I've watched and seen work. It's called Narcan. It's actually incredible. Today, we applaud Adapt Pharma's decision to provide free -- free -- Narcan to all high schools, colleges, and universities in America.

I'd like you to come up, Mike. Come up. (Applause.) Where's Mike? Come up, Mike. That's really an amazing and generous offer. Thank you.

Tell us a little bit about that, Mike. Please.

MR. KELLY: So, Adapt is a small company that has a big job, which is to reverse overdoses. And we've provided, free of charge, four boxes to all colleges and universities in the United States; two boxes free for every high school in the United States; as well as educational awareness for the nursing departments, as well as the faculty to train and teach everybody about the dangers of opioids and the risks, and also the benefits of having Narcan nasal spray near where opioids are.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

MR. KELLY: Thank you. Appreciate it. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mike. It's amazing, generous. And I've watched the police and the fire -- they come around and they've become so good at it. But I've seen people that are just about dead wake up.

Now, the problem is, they then go back, in many cases, to the drugs, and they do it again and again and again. But we have to work on that. We have to work on that very, very strongly.

I also want to recommend and commend a Richmond-based company, Kaléo, for donating more than 300,000 doses of their overdose-reversing drug to first responders, which has already saved more than 5,000 lives in a very short period of time.

My administration has made clear that medical providers can share crucial information with family members about an overdose so that their loved ones can help them get into treatment. We need treatment.

We're making medically assisted treatment more available and affordable, and we continue to increase competition and drive down drug prices. And we're driving them down. We're going to have a major news conference, probably at the White House, in about a month, because all of you people -- and I'm talking about prescription drugs, not necessarily the drugs that we're talking about here. But we pay, as a country, so much

more for drugs because of the drug lobbies and other reasons, and the complexity of distribution, which is basically another term for saying, "How do we get more money?"

And if you compare our drug prices to other countries in the world, in some cases it's many times higher for the exact same pill, or whatever it is, in the exact same package, made in the exact same plant. And we're going to change that.

And I would like to ask Secretary Azar just to come up and mention opioid, but also talk about how we're getting your drug prices down. And we've already saved billions of dollars for our country, and it's reflected in much lower drug prices. Watch what's going to happen over a short period of time. This man is one of the great professionals, ran an incredibly successful drug company. Who knows better than the guy running the drug company, Eli Lilly? That's your company, right? Or was.

SECRETARY AZAR: It was.

THE PRESIDENT: Now you're on the other side, though. So nobody knows better. The most respected man in that industry -- and we got him to work, because he loves our country.

Would you tell them a little bit about what you have planned for drug prices and also opioids, in terms of stoppage? Please. Secretary. (Applause.)

SECRETARY AZAR: Well, thank you, Mr. President. And, you know, you've done a lot already to tackle this issue of drug pricing. So, last year, the FDA approved more generic drugs than it ever has in its history. And that brings prices down for patients, for the system, for everybody. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Great.

SECRETARY AZAR: You also changed the rules so our senior citizens pay less out of pocket for their drugs. That's \$3.2 billion that they're paying less out of pocket for their drugs when they go to the pharmacy. (Applause.)

And then, we're going to be rolling out, as you mentioned, in about a month, a whole slate of other proposals around how we decrease the price of drugs and how we bring discounts that the middlemen right now are getting; how those will go to our patients, to individuals.

Now we're attacking this with the same level of action, determination, and resolve that you're bring to the opioid crisis. And that's where we're focused on prevention and getting that one-third fewer illegal opioid prescriptions to our people. The second is the stopping the illicit flow of these opioids into our country. And the third is compassionate treatment for people -- evidence-based, science-based, compassionate treatment - that can help people recover and stay away from relapse.

So, thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alex. You'll be seeing drug prices falling very substantially in the not-too-distant future, and it's going to be beautiful.

And I want to thank, also, Scott Gottlieb. Scott is working on different things, but one of them is called "Right to Try." Do you know what "Right to Try" is? These are for people that are terminally ill. And there are very, very good-looking combinations of things, or pills, medicines, potential cures. And they're terminal, and they're not going to be living much longer. And we don't have the right to give them these experimental drugs or these early-stage drugs that really show promise, for whatever reason. But they say because they don't want to harm somebody, if you can believe it. They don't want to harm. So the people will oftentimes go to foreign lands, foreign countries. They'll do anything. They want hope. They want hope. "Right to Try."

So we're working with Congressman Greg Walden and numerous other senators and congressmen. And I think we're going to have good luck. The Democrats have been pushing back on it, but I think many of them are also coming along. It's called "Right to Try." A patient is terminal. There's good progress made with a certain drug. We're going to make it possible for that patient to get that drug. And maybe it's going to work. It's hope. It's incredible; they've been talking about this for years and years and years. We're going to get it approved. So important. All right? (Applause.)

To further expand treatment, I'm also calling on Congress to change the restrictive 1970s-era law that prevents Medicaid from paying for care at certain treatment facilities with more than 16 beds. It's such an important factor.

In the meantime, my administration is granting waivers to states so they can help people who need treatment now, Governor.

We're also going to help inmates leaving prison get treatment so they can have a second chance to become productive, law-abiding citizens. And what we've really done for the inmates -- you know, it's very hard for them to get out of jail and get a job.

What we've really done for them -- better than anything we can sign, any legislation that we can pass demanding that you hire -- we're getting a great economy. It hasn't been this good in many, many years. Some people say it's never been this good.

And what's happened is, as you see, unemployment is way down, and people are starting to hire inmates. And the results are incredible. Some of these employers are calling up, saying, "Wow, what great people." We're giving them a second chance. It's very, very important. So the tremendous economy is helping us very much with that program.

We want every American -- (applause) -- thank you. We want every American to be able to be able to reach their full God-given potential. And we will succeed together as one people, one nation, and one great American family. Because Americans never give in, and we never, ever give up. This group never gives up, right? Never give up. Your boy. (Applause.)

The brave families here today remind us that the strength of America is found in the heart of our people. We see America's heart in the parents who won't accept addiction as the fate of their children. And if something horrible has befallen that family, they go around and they want to make sure it never happens to another family. And that's why we thank you so much, and we thank your boy. (Applause.) He did not die in vain.

We see it in sons and daughters who cheer on moms and dads as they recover. We see it in the doctors and nurses who provide constant and loving care. We see it in the heroic law enforcement officers who race into unimaginable danger. We see it in EMTs and firefighters who act so quickly to save so many lives. And we see this American heart in the men and women who fight every day to help rescue their fellow citizens from the grips of addiction.

These are the courageous souls who remind us that, for America, there is nothing beyond our reach. Nothing at all. (Applause.) Nothing.

We will defeat this crisis, we will protect our beautiful children, and we will ensure that tomorrow is better, brighter, stronger, and greater than ever before. Because as long as we have trust in our citizens, pride in our country, and faith in our God, we will not fail. (Applause.) Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. (Applause.) Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

Together, we will end the scourge of drug addiction in America once and for all. We will win. We will beat it. We'll be tough. We'll be smart. We'll be kind. We'll be loving. We'll do whatever we have to do. But we're going to win.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless America. (Applause.) Thank you very much. Thank you.

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3:14 P.M. EDT