

Why isn't Massachusetts taking Fentanyl more seriously?

Massachusetts has **twice the drug overdoses** than the national average. A new report states that **Fentanyl is now responsible for 75% of the overdose deaths in Massachusetts**. In a state where we ban assault rifles because of their firepower, why is Fentanyl treated as a less dangerous drug than heroin?

According to the New Bedford police department, heroin is considered a class A drug and Fentanyl is considered class B. Class A drugs carry stiffer penalties than class B ones. Per the National Institute on Drug Abuse, Fentanyl 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine, so it is far more deadly than heroin. It seems that scientists, drug dealers, police and everyone else on the planet knows the dangers of Fentanyl except Massachusetts legislators.

Legislators did increase the penalty for trafficking more than 10 grams of Fentanyl in 2015, but penalties for heroin are stiffer. For example, heroin carries a minimum mandatory sentence of 3.5 years for over 18 grams and not more than 30 years in jail. Fentanyl has no minimum mandatory sentence and not more than 20 years for 10 grams or more. It's still safer under the law to be a Fentanyl dealer than a heroin dealer, even though Fentanyl dealers are killing 300% more people than heroin dealers.

While legislators haven't pushed to make Fentanyl equal or worse than heroin, our judges seem to be taking it easy on Fentanyl dealers as well. Just last Thursday a **Fairhaven man wanted by the police on a warrant for selling Fentanyl was arrested in a Dartmouth hotel with 18 grams of Fentanyl**, a digital scale, packaging material, as well as Suboxone strips

and Alprazolam. It's common for judges to give \$500 bails to dealer with lots of cash and oddly enough these dealers don't turn a new leaf to become responsibly citizens.

To make things even worse, Massachusetts legislators are pushing for lower bails and pushing down the age that someone is considered a juvenile from 18 to 21. Talk to any prosecutor or police officer and they'll tell you that low bails increase crime. Defense lawyers are great at continuing cases for month if not years while their clients go back to sell drugs and intimidating any witnesses against them.

New Bedford had a 75% increase in overdoses in 2016 and the crisis is worsening. Fentanyl has made the heroin crisis much worse, killing people at a 3-1 rate compared to heroin. It's time our legislators act to punish Fentanyl dealers equally if not more severe than heroin dealers. If they can ban tasers and assault rifles because of their fire power, then they should do the same with Fentanyl dealers. It's also time for our judges to keep Fentanyl dealers in jail until their court case by adding higher bails. Let's increase the bail and get them a court date as fast as possible.