

Lawmakers Push Partisanship Aside to Tackle Opioid Crisis

Throughout the past month, congressmen have put partisan differences aside to pass a massive package of bills aimed at ending the growing opioid crisis affecting nearly every district in America.

"This is a national crisis right now. Every member has stories from their district," Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), House Republican Conference chair, told *CBN News*.

"I have a friend, who—a skiing accident and now she's addicted, has lost her kids, addicted to heroin—and this is just one example," continued McMorris Rodgers.

In the past few weeks, the House passed close to 60 bipartisan bills tied to opioids. They're targeting the problem from multiple sides, from preventing addiction to expanding access to treatment.

Rep. Buddy Carter (R-GA), the only former pharmacist in Congress, tells *CBN News* this is a complicated situation.

"There's no one solution to this problem. This is an epidemic. It's killing 115 Americans every day," said Carter.

Carter is active in the legislative process, and he's introduced three of the bills himself. One bill he's sponsoring gives pharmacists tools to identify fraudulent prescriptions, but he cautions Congress against overreacting and punishing those following the rules.

"As a pharmacist, the only thing worse than me filling a prescription that's going to be diverted or abused is not filling a prescription for someone who truly needed that medication," explained Carter.

The Georgia lawmaker also warns about the need to close a big gap in the medicine physicians can prescribe.

“Once you get past ibuprofen and acetaminophen and tramadol, then you jump to the opioids and that’s a big gap in between those two,” continued Carter. “We need the pharmaceutical doctors who have worked miracles through research and development; we need them to come up with some alternatives for us.”

He tells CBN News he’s pleased with the strong bipartisan effort in the House—and hopes the Senate will act soon on this crisis.

“This is something that needs to be addressed immediately. The sooner the better,” warned Carter.

President Donald Trump’s administration is strongly supportive of the legislative efforts to address the crisis and has set up a commission to combat drug addiction and the opioid crisis.

“My administration is committed to fighting the drug epidemic and helping get treatment for those in need,” said Trump.

Reprinted with permission from . Copyright The Christian Broadcasting Network, all rights reserved. {eoa}