

Written by Kathy

Sunday, 24 December 2017 03:45 - Last Updated Sunday, 24 December 2017 21:47



Clevelandurbannews.com and Kathywraycolemanonlinenewsblog.com , Ohio's most read Black digital newspaper and Black blog with some 5 million views on Google Plus alone. Tel: (216) 659-0473 and Email: editor@clevelandurbannews.com. Kathy Wray Coleman, editor-in-chief, and who trained for 17 years at the Call and Post Newspaper in Cleveland, Ohio. We interviewed former president Barack Obama one-on-one when he was campaigning for president. As to the Obama interview, [CLICK HERE TO READ THE ENTIRE ARTICLE AT CLEVELAND URBAN NEWS.COM, OHIO'S LEADER IN BLACK DIGITAL NEWS](#)

CLEVELANDURBANNEWS.COM-WASHINGTON, D.C - The U.S. congress on Thursday unanimously passed a bipartisan bill that allocates \$15 million for U.S. Customs and Border Protection to buy and use portable screening equipment to detect fentanyl before it enters the United States, a bill co-sponsored by Ohio Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown of Cleveland.

Congress passes U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown's INTERDICT Act, a bi-partisan bill to address the opioid epidemic

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Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid analgesic that is similar to morphine but is 50 to 100 times more potent. It is a schedule II prescription drug and is often used to cut heroin.

"Brown spoke on the Senate floor on Thursday and lobbied his Senate colleagues to pass the legislation.

The opioid epidemic is devastating our communities," said Brown. "Law enforcement officers need every tool available to keep fentanyl out of the country and off of Ohio streets."

The bill, dubbed the INTERDICT Act, passed the U.S. Senate on Thursday after approval by the House of Representatives in October, and it awaits the signature of President Trump to become law.

The legislation allocates funds for additional drug screening devices at ports of entry, mail and express consignment facilities for customs and border patrol agents, additional chemical screening devices and monies for resources for support staff to analyze data at its laboratories.

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Ohio is among one of the hardest hit states relative to the opioid epidemic.

Between 2015 and 2016, overdose deaths rose by 33 percent in Ohio, with 4,000 deaths in 2016 alone.

Overdose deaths are predicted to reach a figure of nearly 825 by the end of 2017 in Cuyahoga County, which includes the largely Black major metropolitan city of Cleveland, up 25 percent from 2016,.

In 2016 Cuyahoga County tracked 666 deaths from drug overdoses, according to the county medical examiner's office.

Opioid deaths, including deaths from fentanyl, heroin and prescription painkillers, continue to increase in the U.S. with six of 10 overdoses nationally due to opioids, research reveals.

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The Centers for Disease Control reported that in 2016 some 64,070 people died nationwide from drug overdoses, a jump of 21 percent from 2015.

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