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# Senator Joan Huffman

## Senate District 17

### **Senator Joan Huffman Files Senate Bill 645 to Combat Fentanyl**

AUSTIN — In response to the growing fentanyl epidemic in Texas and around the nation, Senator Joan Huffman filed SB 645, which would increase the criminal penalties for the manufacturing and distribution of fentanyl.

"Since the beginning of Operation Lone Star, the Texas Department of Public Safety has seized over 353 million lethal doses of fentanyl which is enough to kill nearly every person in the United States," said Huffman. "Senate Bill 645 sends a clear message to those manufacturing and peddling this lethal poison that the State of Texas is fighting back."

As filed, SB 645 increases the penalty for manufacturing or delivery of less than 1 gram of fentanyl from a state jail felony to a third-degree felony. Furthermore, when an individual overdoses and dies from fentanyl, the penalty would be enhanced to a second-degree felony. This is designed to address the "one-pill scenario", where due to the lethality of fentanyl compared to other illicit drugs, it only takes one pill to kill.

Additionally, to further crack down on distribution, SB 645 includes possession of fentanyl with intent to deliver in the organized criminal activity statute. Finally, it clarifies penalty levels for drug offenses to ensure more efficient prosecution of these crimes.

"Everyday, Texans are losing their lives to fentanyl," Huffman said. "Because of our proximity to the border, we must pass legislation like SB 645 that will severely punish those who are flooding our communities with the most lethal street drug we have ever seen as a society. I look forward to working with my colleagues to get this bill signed into law."

*(Senator Joan Huffman represents District 17, which is comprised of Colorado, Jackson, Matagorda, and Wharton County and portions of Brazoria, Ft. Bend, Harris, and Waller County. Huffman currently serves as Chair of the Senate Committee on Finance, Chair of the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting, and is a senior member of the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice and the Legislative Budget Board.)*

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