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Bill To Address Role In Drug Epidemic

By WV Daily News | WVDN APR 27, 2021

Washington, DC – Today, U.S. Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) reintroduced the Changing the Culture of the FDA Act, which would amend the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) mission statement to include the agency's responsibility for addressing the ongoing drug epidemic.

“In 2020, more than 87,000 Americans died from drug overdoses, and we can safely assume that 51% of those deaths involved opioids or synthetic opioids. The FDA must acknowledge their involvement in this national crisis that has taken far too many West Virginians and Americans from their families, friends, and loved ones. As the federal agency overseeing the approval of opioids and synthetic opioids, the FDA played and continues to play an essential role in the drug epidemic.

My bill would change the FDA mission statement to include language that addresses the agency's need and responsibility to address the epidemic that has ravaged our nation and my home state of West Virginia. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to worsen this already heartbreaking drug epidemic, it is imperative now more than ever that our Federal agencies take responsibility for addressing this crisis. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to address this continuing crisis that has impacted each and every one of us.”

Senator Manchin's recent efforts to address the drug epidemic:

On April 22, Senators Manchin and Tim Scott introduced the bipartisan Non-Opioid Directive (NOD) Act, which would establish a non-opioid directive form that allows patients to notify health professionals that they do not wish to be treated with opioids.

On April 21, Senator Manchin delivered remarks on the Senate Floor urging Congress to pass his bipartisan bill, FIGHT Fentanyl Act, which would permanently reschedule fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances.

On March 26, Senator Manchin led seven senators in calling on President Joe Biden to bring in new FDA leadership to address the growing opioid epidemic that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

West Virginia loses US House seat amid population decline

By The Associated Press | WVDN APR 27, 2021



By CUNEYT DIL Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — West Virginia’s long population slide has cost the state another congressional seat, according to U.S. Census Bureau data released Monday, likely forcing three Republican incumbents to vie for two House districts after the next round of redistricting.

The census data delivered the latest blow to a state where the coal industry’s demise has had a shattering effect on the economy. West Virginia’s resident population dipped to 1,793,716 in 2020, down nearly 3.2% from 1,852,994 in 2010, the largest decline in the nation. The state once had six House seats, but the delegation has been shrinking since 1960.

As the exodus continued, Republican Gov. Jim Justice and the GOP lawmakers who have a supermajority in the Legislature tried to cut income taxes this year to entice more to stay and others to move in. The state has even offered financial incentives, including free admission to state tourist and recreation attractions, to lure new residents.

But the tax cuts failed as conservatives disagreed on the details during the 60-day legislative session. Justice has vowed to campaign statewide for his proposal and then summon lawmakers back for a special session to pass it.

Roman Stauffer, a GOP consultant, expects the legislature’s redistricting process later this year to result in the two remaining congressional districts being divided between north and south. Reps. David McKinley and Alex Mooney would face off in a Republican primary in 2022, if both choose to run for reelection in the north. Meanwhile, Rep. Carol Miller is likely to seek reelection representing the southern portion of the state, which has felt the brunt of the economic effects from deserted coalfields.

“West Virginians have seen too many neighbors, friends, and family members leave our state,” Miller said in a statement to The Associated Press. “My mission to make West Virginia the best place to live, work, and raise a family will continue just the same after the census data is released.”

In a joint statement last week, the current House members said they all planned to run for reelection, but might reconsider after the new lines are drawn.

McKinley has not faced a primary opponent since first winning his congressional seat in 2010. He is from Wheeling, in the state’s northern panhandle, and is a former state legislator who ran for governor in 1996. Mooney, a former Maryland state senator, was elected to his seat in 2014 and lives in Charles Town, a bright spot of growth that’s about an hour and a half drive from Washington, D.C.

In 2010, Democrats controlled all but one of West Virginia’s five congressional offices, including both U.S. Senate seats. The state’s transformation into a GOP stronghold accelerated over the past decade, and registered Republicans now outnumber Democrats. Former President Donald Trump carried the state with 66% of the vote last year.

Sen. Joe Manchin is now the sole Democrat to hold statewide office. His term is up in 2024.