



OFFICE OF THE STATE ATTORNEY

PRESS RELEASE



March 15, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marc Freeman
mfreeman@sa15.org
561-355-7263

Palm Beach County State Attorney Aronberg Vows to Continue Push for Legalization of Fentanyl Test Strips in Next Legislative Session

The drug overdoses of West Point students on spring break in South Florida were entirely preventable, says State Attorney Dave Aronberg. Some of the students unknowingly used fentanyl-laced cocaine. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid up to 50 times more potent than heroin.

Aronberg's Addiction Recovery Task Force had proposed new state legislation that would decriminalize fentanyl test strips, which can easily detect the presence of the illegal drug. The proposal, an amendment to Florida Senate Bill 190, passed the Senate with bipartisan support. But the measure failed to win approval in the State House on Friday, a day after the spring breakers were rushed to the hospital.

"This was a lost opportunity," Aronberg said of the legislation. "The Florida House of Representatives had a chance to save lives from the worsening opioid epidemic, yet refused to do so. I am extremely disappointed our legislation did not pass, but remain determined to see this through next year."

In 2020, there were 1,677 overdose deaths caused by cocaine spiked with fentanyl, according to data provided by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Annual Medical Examiners Report.

xxx