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Abstract

H.R. 2923 is an enforcement-oriented anti-substance abuse bill that would decrease local methamphetamine production by monitoring sales and controlling the availability of over the counter cold medicines that can be used to manufacture methamphetamine for illicit activities. This goal would be accomplished by creating uniform standards for the electronic surveillance of pseudoephedrine sales.

Methamphetamine, a street drug made from over the counter cold medicines containing pseudoephedrine, has become a serious law enforcement and public health issue. Five percent of the US population has used methamphetamine at some point in their lives with rates of abuse highest in the western states (Figure 1). According to the National Drug Threat Survey, law enforcement agencies rate methamphetamine as the number one drug threat in all regions west of the Mississippi River. Methamphetamine abuse is second only to cocaine in the southeast region and Florida.

In 2006 the President signed the Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act of 2005 into law. The law’s original intent was to produce an electronic national precursor sales database and improve reporting of potentially illicit activity to law enforcement. Due to industry concerns, the law did not contain the federal mandate, requirements for electronic reporting, and “stop buy” provisions that would have prompted pharmacists to abort potentially unlawful sales. H.R. 2923, the Combat Methamphetamine Enhancement Act of 2009, will address several key shortcomings of the 2005 law by making specific changes to the Controlled Substances Act. The new changes would require retailers and mail-order distributors to register with the DEA and submit reports of retail sales of listed chemical products to the Attorney General. The Attorney General would then develop lists of persons who are certified to sell the products and make it available electronically for law enforcement use. The Combat Methamphetamine Enhancement Act of 2009 will close key loop holes in the original law and better protect our communities, people and environment.

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