

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5032

To amend the Controlled Substances Act to permanently schedule the class of benzimidazole-opioids known as nitazenes, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 22, 2025

Mr. VINDMAN (for himself and Mr. BAUMGARTNER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To amend the Controlled Substances Act to permanently schedule the class of benzimidazole-opioids known as nitazenes, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Nitazene Control Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6 Congress finds the following:

7 (1) Nitazenes are a class of synthetic opioids
8 first synthesized in the 1950s that exhibit extreme

1 potency at the mu-opioid receptor, with some
2 analogs exceeding the potency of fentanyl.

3 (2) The Drug Enforcement Administration
4 (DEA) has temporarily or permanently scheduled
5 multiple nitazene compounds under Schedule I of
6 the Controlled Substances Act due to their high
7 abuse potential and lack of accepted medical use.

8 (3) Nitazenes and nitazene analogues have
9 emerged in the illicit drug supply as designer drugs
10 and contribute to overdose and fatal poisonings in
11 the United States.

12 (4) A class-wide permanent scheduling of
13 nitazenes is necessary to preemptively address the
14 proliferation of new analogs, streamline enforcement,
15 and protect public health.

16 **SEC. 3. SCHEDULE I CLASSIFICATION OF NITAZENES.**

17 (a) AMENDMENT.—Section 202(c) of the Controlled
18 Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 812(c)) is amended by adding
19 at the end of Schedule I the following:

20 “(f) Benzimidazole-opioids, commonly referred to as
21 nitazenes, including any substance (including its salts, iso-
22 mers, and salts of isomers) that has a chemical structure
23 that is substantially similar to that of etonitazene or
24 isotonitazene, including:

1 “(1) A benzimidazole core substituted at the 2-
2 position with a benzyl or substituted benzyl group;
3 and

4 “(2) A basic nitrogen-containing side chain at
5 the 1-position; and

6 “(3) Exhibits agonist activity at the mu-opioid
7 receptor.

8 Such substances include, but are not limited to:
9 etonitazene, clonitazene, metonitazene, isotonitazene,
10 protonitazene, butonitazene, etodesnitazene, flunitazene,
11 N-pyrrolidino etonitazene, N-desethyl isotonitazene, and
12 N-piperidinyl etonitazene.”.

13 (b) REMOVAL OF TEMPORARY STATUS.—Any sub-
14 stance included in the amendment to section 202(c) of the
15 Controlled Substances Act made by this section that was
16 temporarily scheduled under section 201(h) of the Con-
17 trolled Substances Act shall be deemed permanently
18 scheduled and subject to the requirements of Schedule I
19 as of the date of enactment of this Act.

20 (c) RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.—The Attorney Gen-
21 eral, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and
22 Human Services, may issue rules to clarify the scope of
23 the nitazene class as necessary to enforce this section, pro-
24 vided such rules are consistent with the chemical definition
25 in subsection (a)(1).

1 (d) RESEARCH EXEMPTION.—

2 (1) Notwithstanding the amendments made by
3 subsection (a), a researcher who, as of the date of
4 enactment of this Act, is conducting research involv-
5 ing a substance described in subsection (a) that was
6 not previously listed in Schedule I of section 202(c)
7 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C.
8 812(c)), shall not be required to obtain a registra-
9 tion under section 303(f) of such Act (21 U.S.C.
10 823(f)) solely due to the inclusion of that substance
11 in Schedule I, provided that:

12 (A) the research is being conducted pursu-
13 ant to an active investigational new drug (IND)
14 application or other applicable regulatory ex-
15 emption recognized by the Food and Drug Ad-
16 ministration or Drug Enforcement Administra-
17 tion;

18 (B) the research was approved by an insti-
19 tutional review board (IRB) prior to the enact-
20 ment of this Act; and

21 (C) the researcher notifies the Attorney
22 General, in a manner determined by the Attor-
23 ney General, within 90 days of enactment of
24 this Act.

1 (2) The exemption under paragraph (1) shall
2 remain in effect for a period not to exceed 18
3 months from the date of enactment, during which
4 time the researcher may apply for a registration
5 under section 303(f), and the Attorney General shall
6 expedite such applications to ensure continuity of re-
7 search.

8 (3) Nothing in this subsection shall be con-
9 strued to authorize the initiation of new research
10 using substances described in subsection (a) without
11 proper registration and scheduling compliance.

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