

## **Providing Officers With Electronic Resources (POWER) of 2018**

*Introduced by Senators Sherrod Brown, Edward J. Markey, Marco Rubio, and Rob Portman*

State, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement officers are on the frontlines of efforts to combat illegal drugs, particularly those contributing to the ongoing opioid epidemic in America. The illicit synthetic opioid fentanyl — which is up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine — is fueling record levels of drug overdoses and presents an unprecedented safety risk to officers and first responders. There have been numerous cases of officers and first responders accidentally overdosing after coming into contact with fentanyl present at the scene of a crime or medical emergency. In addition, the quantity of drugs being seized by officers is contributing to significant backlogs in local and state testing laboratories, resulting in agencies waiting months for test results. This leads to delays in charging decisions and prosecutions, and hinders the effectiveness and efficiency of drug investigations.

The POWER Act would establish a new grant program at the Department of Justice with the specific purpose of providing funds to state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement organizations to obtain high-tech, portable chemical screening devices. These devices, also known as interdiction devices, are already widely used by federal law enforcement officers to immediately identify dangerous drugs at our nation's ports of entry. In the hands of our state and local law enforcement officers, these devices would enhance both officer safety and the efficiency of investigations, enabling our law enforcement professionals to better respond to the drug crisis in America.

The POWER Act is supported by the National Sheriffs' Association, Fraternal Order of Police, Major Cities Chiefs Association, Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, National Association of Police Organizations, National HIDTA Directors Association, Sergeants Benevolent Association, International Union of Police Associations, National Narcotics Officers' Associations' Coalition, National Alliance of State Drug Enforcement Agencies, National Tactical Officers Association, Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association, and Ohio Fraternal Order of Police.