



# Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Office of the Attorney General

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **ATTORNEY GENERAL EDWARD MANIBUSAN SUPPORTS BIPARTISAN LEGISLATION TO PREVENT YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

**Office of the Attorney General, Saipan** – Attorney General Edward Manibusan today joined a bipartisan coalition of 38 attorneys general from across the country in calling on Congress to pass the Youth Substance Use Prevention and Awareness Act, a federal bill that aims to reduce youth drug use through research-based public education and strategic community outreach.

“Empowering our youth with the knowledge and support they need to make healthy choices is essential in building and maintaining a safer and stronger community. Prevention goes beyond raising awareness; it’s also about taking meaningful, proactive steps to protect and preserve our future,” said Attorney General Manibusan.

The legislation, introduced by U.S. Senators Mark Kelly (D-AZ) and Thom Tillis (R-NC), would amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to provide targeted federal funding for public service announcements (PSAs), youth-led campaigns, and other outreach tools that help prevent early substance use. All campaigns funded under the bill must be grounded in evidence, designed for cultural relevance, and adapted to meet the specific needs of local communities.

“This thoughtful and timely legislation represents a critical, evidence-based step toward reducing youth substance use through strategic public education and engagement,” write the attorneys general in a letter to Senate leadership.

The Youth Substance Use Prevention and Awareness Act would fund a range of efforts to better reach youth with timely, credible, and accessible information, including:

- Culturally relevant PSAs tailored specifically to youth
- Youth-led PSA contests to drive peer-to-peer engagement and creativity
- Federal grants for outreach across TV, radio, social media, streaming platforms, and other media

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- Annual reporting requirements to measure reach and effectiveness, ensuring transparency and accountability

The coalition of attorneys general stressed that youth substance use remains a growing public health and public safety concern—especially in light of the rise in fentanyl-related overdoses and the increasing availability of synthetic drugs. Research consistently shows that individuals who begin using drugs at an early age are more likely to develop long-term substance use disorders, and the consequences can be devastating for families, schools, and communities.

“It is not just a matter of policy—it is a matter of prevention, education, and hope,” the attorneys general wrote. Attorney General Manibusan praised the bipartisan nature of the bill and emphasized the importance of proactive, science-based prevention efforts at a time when youth face growing exposure to dangerous substances.

In addition to Attorney General Manibusan, the letter was signed by the Attorneys General of the following states and territories: Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, Vermont, U.S. Virgin Islands, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. The letter was led by Attorneys General John Formella (New Hampshire), William Tong (Connecticut), Letitia James (New York), and Marty Jackley (South Dakota).

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