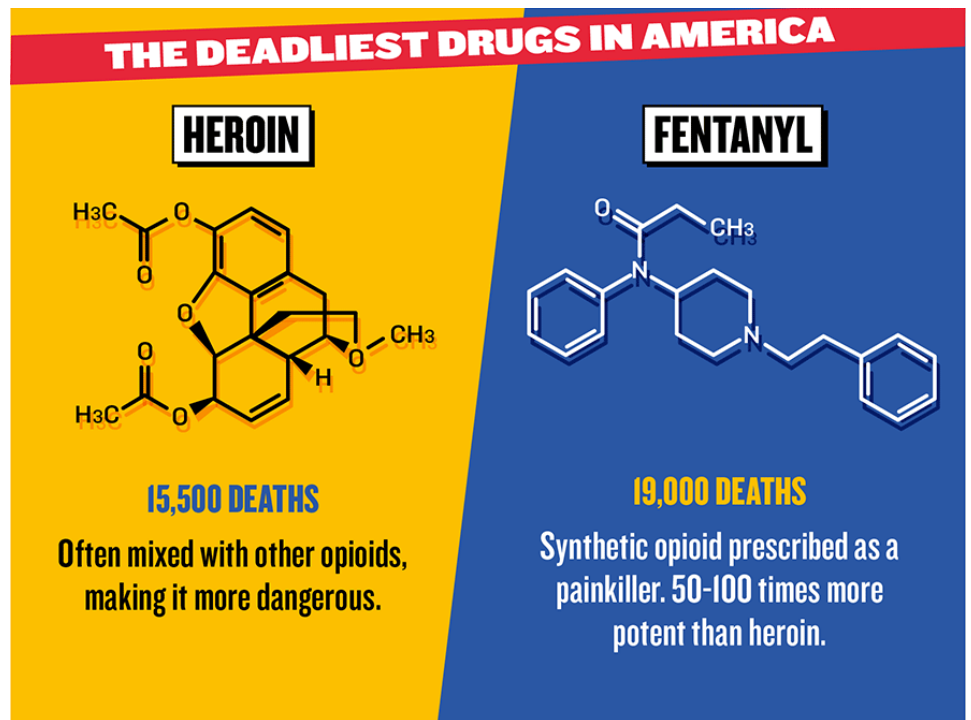


# 'Death penalty for drug dealers', urges Trump

Would executing drug dealers solve America's opioid crisis? Donald Trump is seriously suggesting this drastic measure. "We have to get tough", he says. But his opponents are aghast.



**Blurred lines:** Many of the most dangerous opioids can easily be bought at pharmacies.

Donald Trump is rolling out **new plans** to tackle the country's opioid epidemic. The plan involves the possibility of the death penalty for high intensity dealers.

Every eight minutes an American dies of a drug overdose. Opioids, such as heroin, are the chief killers. The crisis claimed an estimated 42,000 lives in 2016, and health officials believe the numbers continued to rise in 2017.

In October, President Trump declared the opioid epidemic a public health emergency, calling it a "national shame" and a "human tragedy".

Opioids are drugs designed to replicate the pain reducing properties of opium. They include illegal drugs like heroin and **fentanyl**,

as well as legal painkillers like morphine.

And so Donald Trump is calling for an expansion of the federal death penalty at a time when its use is being **increasingly curtailed across the US**.

He has praised Philippine President **Rodrigo Duterte**, whose war against drug dealers has led to extra-judicial killings.

Most advocates of the death penalty believe it is the right punishment for murderers. They argue that, by bringing deadly drugs into America, those involved in the drug trade are morally equivalent to murderers.

Is Trump right?

## Rough justice

overdose deaths in the US. In some areas heroin is the main killer, but in others it has almost disappeared and the problem is caused by other potent painkillers, such as fentanyl.

## Q: What do we not know?

Yes, say some. The deterrent argument must prevail. Look at Singapore: the country has one of the lowest rates of drug use in the world, this has largely been credited to the introduction of death penalties for major dealers and traffickers. If the supply dries up, so will the demand.

This would be a cruel waste of money, reply others. The major crime bosses would still escape. And as Dr Jonathan Groner points out in *NBC News*: "The risk of arrest, a trial in which the death penalty is on the table...would hardly be a major worry to someone who faces death on a daily basis."

A: Whether Congress would approve the plan. If it did, the resulting cases would almost certainly be stalled in legal battles for years.

## Q & A

### Q: What do we know?

A: There has been a long-term rise in drug

## YOU DECIDE

Would executing drug dealers help solve the opioid crisis?

## ACTIVITIES

Class debate: "Is drug addiction a cultural problem or an economic problem?"

## SOME PEOPLE SAY...

"I think the reason to support the death penalty is because it saves other people's lives."

George W. Bush

WHAT DO YOU THINK?



## WORD WATCH

**New plans** – Trump’s plan will focus on law enforcement, as well as prevention and education through advertising. The plan also aims to help those impacted by the epidemic

find jobs.

**Fentanyl** – The drug is prescribed by doctors, but the fentanyl that is made for street sale is illegal.

**Increasingly curtailed across the US** – 19

states have abolished the death penalty – seven of which abolished it in the 21st century.

**Rodrigo Duterte** – Duterte made his name as mayor of Davao City, where his ruthless tactics killed 1,400 suspected drug dealers.



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