

URGING THE GOVERNOR AND THE OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL TO FILE LAWSUITS AGAINST OPIOID DRUG COMPANIES

WHEREAS, certain pharmaceutical companies mislead the public about the addictiveness of powerful prescription opioid drugs; and

WHEREAS, certain pharmaceutical companies engaged in fraud, conspiracy and negligence in the development and marketing of highly addictive opioid drugs; and

WHEREAS, certain pharmaceutical companies used sophisticated and highly deceptive and unfair marketing campaigns to reverse the medical communities understanding of opioids to increase opioid drug use; and

WHEREAS, certain pharmaceutical companies knew that prolonged use of opioids were addictive and subject to abuse and should be used only as a last resort; and

WHEREAS, certain pharmaceutical companies knew that prolonged use of opioids caused the effectiveness of the drugs to wane, requiring increase in dosage and markedly increasing the risk of significant side effects and addiction; and

WHEREAS, certain pharmaceutical companies used misleading science to convince the medical community to increasingly prescribe opioid drugs; and

WHEREAS, prescription opioids are narcotics that are derived from or possess properties similar to opium and heroin; and

WHEREAS, certain companies spent hundreds of millions of dollars to promote their products knowing they were misleading the public of the dangers of their drugs; and

WHEREAS, the actions by certain pharmaceutical companies have resulted in billions of dollars in profits for these companies; and

WHEREAS, Americans represent only 4.6% of the world's population but consume 80% of the worlds opioids and 99% of the global hydrocodone supply; and

WHEREAS, opioid sales generated \$8 billion in revenue for drug companies in 2012 and the projection for 2016 is \$15.3 billion; and

WHEREAS, certain pharmaceutical companies marketing efforts—and not any medical breakthrough—rationalized prescribing opioids for chronic pain and opened the floodgates of opioid use and abuse; and

WHEREAS, in a recent Drug Threat Assessment, the Drug Enforcement Agency reported that in 2013, more than 46,000 people in the United States died from a drug overdose and more than half of those were caused by prescription painkillers or heroin; and

WHEREAS, there are 78 deaths a day due to heroin, fentanyl and opioid medications in the United States; and

WHEREAS, recent data for Pennsylvania shows that 10,394,466 prescriptions for opioid medications were filled by individuals in 2015; and

WHEREAS, a report from the Drug Enforcement Agency identified at least 2,497 drug related Pennsylvania overdose deaths in 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth is in the midst of an opioids and heroin epidemic causing thousands of overdose deaths and destroying communities and families; and

WHEREAS, the financial toll this epidemic will have on the limited resources of the Commonwealth will be staggering; and

WHEREAS, States have historically filed lawsuits against industries who engage in illegal business practices, like the tobacco industry in the 1990's, in order to protect its citizens; and

WHEREAS, any funds recovered shall be placed in a reserved account to be used for drug, alcohol and mental health treatment programs; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives urges the Governor and the Office of Attorney General to initiate lawsuits against pharmaceutical companies that engaged in practices that caused the opioids epidemic within the Commonwealth.