

# STATEMENT

*Yadira Caraveo passed legislation to lower the penalty for dealing and possessing fentanyl in Colorado, leading to an 800% increase in fentanyl deaths in the state.*

## Verification

### **Yadira Caraveo Co-Sponsored And Voted For HB19-1263, Legislation That “Defelonizes” Single-Use Drug Possession For Substances Such As Fentanyl To A Misdemeanor—Even If The Individual Possesses Enough Fentanyl To Kill Thousands Of People**

**Yadira Caraveo Was A Co-Sponsor Of HB19-1263, Legislation Regarding “Offense Level For Controlled Substance Possession.”** (HB19-1263 – Offense Level For Controlled Substance Possession, [Colorado General Assembly](#), Introduced 3/22/19)

- **On April 18, 2019, Yadira Caraveo voted for HB19-1263.** ([HB19-1263](#), Passed House 40-25, Caraveo Voted Aye, 4/18/19)
- **On May 3, 2019, Yadira Caraveo voted to repass HB19-1263.** ([HB19-1263](#), Repassed House 43-20, Caraveo Voted Aye, 5/3/19)

**HB19-1263 “Defelonizes” Single-Use Drug Possession For Substances Such As Heroin, Fentanyl, Cocaine, And Most Other Illicit Drugs.** “Colorado Governor Jared Polis on Tuesday signed a law ‘defelonizing’ single-use drug possession for Schedule I and II substances. HB19-1263, ‘defelonizes’ drug possession for substances such as heroin, fentanyl, cocaine and most other illicit drugs. Under the newly passed law, those caught with small amounts of these drugs would face a misdemeanor instead of a felony charge. Dealers would still be punished with a felony, however.” (Oscar Contreras, “Gov. Polis Signs Bill ‘Defelonizing’ Single-Use Drug Possession,” [The Denver Post](#), 5/29/19)

**Under The Provisions Of HB19-1263, Possession Of Up To Four Grams Of Fentanyl—Enough To Kill Up To 2,000 People—Is Classified As A Misdemeanor.** “Three years ago, lawmakers inexplicably downgraded possession of fentanyl and an array of other Schedule I and Schedule II controlled substances from a felony to a misdemeanor. Now, possession of up to four grams of fentanyl — which could kill up to 2,000 people — warrants no more than a ticket from police.” (Editorial Board, “Denver Gazette: Polis Must Demand Action On Fentanyl,” [Colorado Politics](#), 3/4/22)

### **Since HB19-1263 Became Law, Colorado Has Seen A Surge In Deaths Caused By Fentanyl That Has Outpaced Nearly Every Other State**

**In March 2022, It Was Noted That Colorado’s Surge In Deaths Caused By Fentanyl Has Surpassed That Of Every Other State Except Alaska Since 2019, Increasing 382% Over The Two Years Prior To 2022.** “The epidemic of fentanyl overdose deaths is now a staple of headlines, like the deaths of five people last week — at just one residence — in Commerce City. And the hard numbers are terrifying. The surge in deaths caused by the synthetic opioid in our state has outstripped that of every other state but Alaska since 2019 — soaring 382% over the past two years.” (Editorial Board, “Denver Gazette: Polis Must Demand Action On Fentanyl,” [Colorado Politics](#), 3/4/22)

**In January 2024, The DEA Highlighted That Fentanyl-Related Deaths In Colorado Had Risen From 102 In 2018 To 920 In 2022, And That The Colorado DEA Offices Were On Pace To Seize A Record 3 Million Fentanyl Pills In 2023.** “In 2018, Colorado experienced 102 fentanyl-related deaths. By 2021, that number jumped to 910, and in 2022, 920 Coloradans died from a fentanyl poisoning or overdose. Seizures of fentanyl throughout the state have also increased during this time period. The Rocky Mountain Field Division seized 565,200 fentanyl pills throughout Colorado in 2021 and 1.9 million fentanyl pills in 2022. The Colorado offices are on pace to seize a record 3 million fentanyl pills in 2023.” (Steffan W. Tubbs, “DEA Releases New Tip Line to Encourage Information on Drug Kingpin Operating Throughout Colorado,” [United States Drug Enforcement Administration](#), 1/17/24)

**NOTE:** An increase in deaths from 102 deaths to 920 deaths represents a roughly 802% increase in fentanyl-related deaths in Colorado. ([Percentage Increase Calculator](#), Accessed 4/10/24)

**Percentage Increase Calculator**

Starting Value:

Final Value:

ClearCalculate

Answer:

= 801.961% increase

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Solution:

Calculate percentage change  
from Starting Value = 102  
to Final Value = 920

$$\frac{(\text{Final} - \text{Start})}{|\text{Start}|} \times 100$$
$$= \frac{(920 - 102)}{|102|} \times 100$$
$$= \frac{818}{102} \times 100$$
$$= 8.01961 \times 100$$
$$= 801.961\% \text{ change}$$
$$= 801.961\% \text{ increase}$$

*A positive change is an increase.  
A negative change is a decrease.*

([Percentage Increase Calculator](#), Accessed 4/10/24)