



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on February 11, 2022

GOP Senators Introduce CRACK Act

Several Republican lawmakers have introduced a bill that would prohibit federal funding and distribution of drug paraphernalia as the Biden administration is spending \$30 million to provide drug addicts with “safe smoking kits” and sterile syringes, among other “supplies” in a bid to advance “racial equity.”

On Friday, Senators Tim Scott (R-S.C.), Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), and 14 of their colleagues introduced the Cutting off Rampant Access to Crack Kits (CRACK) Act, according to a [press release](#) from Senator Scott. The bill would amend Section 2706 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 ([P.L. 117-2](#)) to prohibit any funds “from directly or indirectly purchasing, supplying, or distributing crack pipes or similar drug paraphernalia,” per the senator.



AP Images
Marco Rubio and Tim Scott

The press release reads,

“The thought of taxpayer money funding crack pipe distributions could not be more ludicrous,” said Senator Scott. “But after a year of ludicrous policies and conflicting statements from the Biden administration, Republicans are leaving nothing up to chance. I’m proud to join my colleagues in introducing this bill to ensure our federal government does not fuel dangerous drug addictions at the expense of American taxpayers.”

Senator Rubio added that it was “pure insanity” for the federal government to subsidize crack-pipe distribution.

Per the text of the proposed legislation ([pdf](#)), “The federal money could not be “used to procure, supply, or distribute pipes, cylindrical objects, or other paraphernalia that can be used to smoke, inhale, or ingest narcotics.”

The press release referred to the Monday [report](#) from the Washington Free Beacon that posted a grant proposal ([pdf](#)) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that will provide funds to nonprofits and local governments to “help make drug use safer for addicts,” beginning May.

To achieve that goal, the HHS plans to spend \$30 million of taxpayer money to buy “safe smoking kits/supplies,” syringes to prevent and control the spread of infectious diseases, overdose-reversal medication, safe-sex kits, and other “equipment and supplies” that would be distributed to the “underserved communities.”

The Free Beacon reported that the HHS official confirmed the “safe smoking kits” would include pipes



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to smoke crack cocaine, crystal methamphetamine, and “any illicit substance.”

HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra and the Office of National Drug Control Policy Director Dr. Rahul Gupta issued a [statement](#) Wednesday, saying, “no federal funding will be used directly or through subsequent reimbursement of grantees to put pipes in safe smoking kits.”

HHS spokeswoman Sarah Lovenheim chimed in and [clarified](#) that the department “is not distributing crack pipes,” adding that the program will “adherence of state and local laws.”

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki also [denied](#) that the Biden administration would soon begin distributing crack pipes. She called the Free Beacon’s report “inaccurate,” and stated, “[The pipes] were never a part of the kit.” Psaki added that included in the “safe smoking kits” were “alcohol swabs, lip balms and other materials to promote hygiene and reduce transmission of diseases like HIV and hepatitis.” The program, Psaki said, was designed to address the opioid crisis that was killing millions of Americans.

The contents of kits “often vary by state based upon federal and state law,” a senior administration official told [HuffPost](#). The outlet further noted, “Providing supplies like glass pipes, however, helps to reduce overdoses and prevents harm caused by smoking plastic, aluminum or copper pipes, which can severely damage the lungs and other organs. They also help drug users avoid transmitting HIV or hepatitis C through cut or burnt lips.”

Republican Senators noted that such a “course reversal” from the administration caused a backlash from the “progressive” activist groups such as Department of Research and Academic Engagement (DRAE) that advocate for the distribution of the “safe” smoking pipes to the addicts.

“Pipe distribution is healthcare — and we’re not being hyperbolic,” the group wrote on its [Twitter](#) account Wednesday. The group further cited several studies that show how “safe” pipes reduce infections among the addicts. The DRAE did not mention that the very use of drugs such as crack cocaine can permanently destroy a person’s physical and mental health.

Instead, the advocates claimed that giving the addicts “safe” pipes, sterile syringes and other drug paraphernalia, as well as drug tests and anti-overdose drugs would enable the communities’ “ability to live safer, happier, healthier, fuller, more connected lives.”

Kassandra Frederique, the executive director of the Drug Policy Alliance, a national nonprofit that advocates for “drug law reform,” [called](#) the Biden administration’s “backtracking” on including “evidence-based resources” (“safe” pipes) a “huge missed opportunity.” That, she believes, will be “disproportionately felt by Black and Indigenous communities.”

The HHS grant proposal explicitly prioritizes “underserved communities that are greatly impacted by the SUD [substance use disorder]” to receive the government “care.” It provides that the definition of such communities is given in section two of President Joe Biden’s Executive Order 13985.

Per that order, the term “underserved communities” refers to populations that have been “systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life,” and includes people of color and LGBTQ+ community.

[According](#) to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (a part of HHS), “harm reduction is critical to keeping people who use drugs alive and as healthy as possible.” Some of the key approaches include connecting individuals to overdose education, distributing opioid overdose reversal medications, and eradicating stigma associated with drug use. Supplying addicts with “safe smoking



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supplies” is listed as one of the “harm reduction activates” on the SAMHSA website.



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