



Matt Dolan: Opioid crisis needs our full attention

[The Lima News](#) | March 2, 2022

By Matt Dolan

Ohio and the nation are fighting a prescription and synthetic opioid epidemic. It has wreaked havoc on local communities along I-70 and up I-75, spreading through Dayton to Lima and Toledo and even as far as the Mahoning Valley. The impact on families has been devastating. The challenge facing local law enforcement in the form of crime and mental health is severe.

The present crisis is being driven by the increased prevalence and potency of fentanyl, a drug approved for pain treatment, which took the lives of more than 64,000 Americans and more than 5,000 Ohioans from April 2020-April 2021. In November, during the apprehension of four Lima men by the Allen County Sheriff's Office, state law enforcement and the FBI, more than one kilogram of suspected fentanyl was seized. According to the federal Drug Enforcement Agency, a lethal dose amounts to roughly 2 milligrams. That means there were approximately 500,000 lethal doses of fentanyl in what was discovered during one bust in Lima.

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ohio made progress in reducing overdose deaths. Yet over the past year, a new challenge has emerged which has brought an increase of lethal drugs, human trafficking and crime onto our streets. The federal government, under the failed leadership of the Biden Administration, has neglected its responsibility to keep Americans safe. According to Ohio law enforcement reckless open border policies directly contribute to the increases of drug and human trafficking inside our state.

Today, nearly 80 percent of overdose deaths in Ohio are caused by fentanyl raw materials sourced from China. From there, they are transported to Mexico and smuggled over the border by drug cartels. During the 12-month period preceding October of last year, a record 11,201 pounds of fentanyl were seized by the U.S. Border Patrol. That quantity, if it were to make it to the streets, would be enough to kill every American. A Stanford-Lancet study released this month warned that the opioid overdose death toll in the U.S. could rise to 1.2 million by 2029.

In Ohio, we have taken aggressive action to address this scourge. Gov. Mike DeWine, at the behest of fellow states, rightly deployed the Ohio National Guard and state law enforcement to back up other state and federal personnel on the Southern Border. The Legislature has also formally called upon the federal government to step up efforts to secure the border and designate drug cartels as foreign terrorist organizations.

Additional actions taken by the Legislature include increasing state penalties for drug trafficking, enhancing penalties for dealers who sell on the premises or near addiction service providers and strengthening criminal offenses and sentences when the substance involved is a fentanyl-related compound. We have also increased state funding for local law enforcement training and equipment, appropriated record sums to child protection services, clinics and programs to combat drug abuse and addiction and voted to authorize pharmacists to dispense or administer by injection an emergency refill of naltrexone if certain conditions are met.

Most often it's our brave local law enforcement officers and first responders that have been forced to bear the brunt of this crisis head-on. That's why I and my colleagues remain committed to fighting for increased support to bolster on-the-ground recovery and treatment programs to wage and win this battle. In the present legislative session, I will also work to advance HB 101 to modernize the funding formula that allocates state investments into county jail construction and renovation, to back our county sheriffs in their efforts to further promote public safety.

Ohio's congressional delegation is also fighting back. This month, Reps. Warren Davidson, Bob Latta, Troy Balderson, Steve Chabot and more than 100 other Members of Congress called on the Biden Administration to permanently make fentanyl a Schedule 1 drug. They have also worked tirelessly to advocate in support of completing physical, virtual and personnel barriers at the border.

The opioid crisis is a battle that is raging inside our local communities, effectively turning Ohio into a border state. This reality warrants the full attention and resources of local, state, and federal stakeholders to save lives. The progress that is being made among local leaders and law enforcement is notable, but it will be limited in its effectiveness until the Biden Administration heeds the recommendations of Ohio's state leaders and our congressional delegation to secure our Southern Border.

Matt Dolan: Biden's awful energy policy handing big win to Putin, Russian oligarchs

[The Columbus Dispatch](#) | February 9, 2022

By Matt Dolan

When Joe Biden entered office, the U.S. was a net energy exporter for the first time since the 1950s.

We had record oil and gas production and a decade of declines in emissions due largely to increased extraction of natural gas.

The U.S. was proving to the world what was once thought to be impossible: you could increase energy production and reduce emissions at the same time.

Instead of further advancing the strong, incentive-driven energy policies of Donald Trump, Democrats at the state and federal level are seeking to stall North American energy production to the benefit of Russia and China.

Biden has been in office a little more than one year, and in that time he has killed the Keystone XL Pipeline, proceeded with banning drilling leases on federal land and pushed the irresponsible Build Back Better Act, which restricts access to energy resources in Alaska and on the Outer Continental Shelf.

The Biden Administration has also done nothing to stop Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's attempts to shutdown Line 5, which would have a detrimental impact on workers and the local economy in Ohio.

These actions were pursued in the name of reducing emissions, yet the fact is that U.S. emissions have increased 5 percent since Biden entered office.

Who has benefitted from these actions?

The clear winner is Vladimir Putin and Russian energy oligarchs who swiftly moved to seize upon increased demand inside world markets.

Our nation's energy policy over the past 12 months has not only hurt U.S. workers, consumers and businesses by limiting energy production, but has actually strengthened Putin's power by making Russian production and their so-called "pipeline diplomacy" even more potent in the global energy game.

Putin now threatens Ukraine with invasion and is demanding that America and our allies withdraw NATO forces from Eastern Europe.

The Russians also sought approval of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which was established to make Germany and Eastern Europe more dependent on Russian natural gas imports. When Republicans in Congress attempted to slap sanctions on the Russian pipeline, it was blocked by Biden and Democrats.

Now, there are reports of Russia limiting natural gas imports to Europe during the winter heating season to maximize their geopolitical leverage. While Russia will be losing out on some exports to Europe, they can afford this kind of action since the Chinese Communist Party is increasingly buying large amounts of Russian oil and gas to secure their own energy needs.

One authoritarian regime bankrolling another. Each sharing a healthy appetite for land grabs and expansion.

One year ago, the pro-energy policies of the Trump Administration were a roadblock for Putin. The U.S. is now exporting record amounts of liquified natural gas to European ports to provide relief for the energy crisis. This has bought the European Union time and given them strength to aid Ukraine and refuse Putin's demands.

U.S. energy independence is more than a slogan, it's an indispensable economic tool in the arsenal of democracy. The ability of American workers, industry and suppliers to export energy to allied nations helps them maintain freedom from the growing shadow cast by dictators like Xi Jinping and Putin.

Biden's attempt to stall domestic production undermines American energy independence. While these actions may advance Democratic efforts to incrementally achieve their reckless Green New Deal, it will have little to no impact on lower emissions. Even more dangerous, these actions carry grave consequences for the free world.

Opinion: America engaged in new cold war with China

[The Cincinnati Enquirer](#) | January 23, 2022

By Matt Dolan

Fifty years ago this month, the United States opened the door to relations with China. Since then, Beijing has incrementally sought to displace America as the world's leading economic and military power. Presidents and Congresses of both parties have sought to counter the rising communist threat to our nation's interests. Varying degrees of success and failure have led us to this moment. America is in a new cold war.

What began as a manufacturing battle waged on factory floors in Dayton and Youngstown, has turned into full-blown effort by the communist regime to undermine our way of life. Now China's expansionist aims are coming for more than our jobs and intellectual property. As laid out in their Document Number 9, the regime seeks to undermine constitutional democracy and republican ideals such as "the separation of powers, a multiparty system, suffrage, an independent judiciary, and a military with civilian oversight."

This is concerning because what we have witnessed from the Biden administration of late has been a projection of weakness on the world stage. The disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan, China's "Sputnik moment" hypersonic missile which caught U.S. Intelligence by surprise, out-of-control spending driving inflation, stalled bilateral tariff negotiations following President Trump's successful Phase One Trade Agreement, even President Biden's recent tirade branding commonsense election laws in states such as Ohio to "Jim Crow in the 21st Century," each embolden Chinese assertions the U.S. system is in decline.

Countering this perception will take the full range of U.S. power projection. Abroad we must strive for enhanced cooperation among advanced and developing democracies, as well as fortification of international alliances such as NATO and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue to preserve collective security through burden sharing. New investments in hard power technology and artificial intelligence must be combined with cultural influence and more sober-minded diplomatic and trade strategies capable of holding China to account for their human rights violations and expansionist aims through the Belt and Road Initiative.

Most notably, victory in this new cold war demands stability at home. State and federal policymakers must take proactive steps to incentivize restructuring and growth of an American economy less reliant on foreign supply chains, products and labor. In the late 1990s, when an Ontario-based company sought to export Great Lakes' water to Asia, the Midwest endured a crash course in the flaws of international trade rules. A short time later, I helped negotiate the Great Lakes Compact on behalf of Ohio, alongside representatives from seven other states and two Canadian provinces. Together, we sent a message to Asia that if they wanted access to 95% of the surface waters of the United States, then they needed to source businesses and jobs here. Many listened and continue to do so today.

Hyper-partisanship and an unwillingness to engage in the hard business of policymaking is a domestic challenge that undermines faith in our constitutional republic. In the aftermath of Jan. 6, Chinese President Xi Jinping seized upon the delay in electoral vote certification to feed his propaganda machine. Fringe political partisans today, whether they be fake conservatives who tarnish the rule of law by casting doubt on U.S. elections, or liberals seeking to erode institutional safeguards and the Constitution to pursue extreme policy agendas, cloak Xi's absurd claims with legitimacy.

Despite these challenges, Ohioans and all Americans can be encouraged by recent progress at the state and federal levels that illustrates cross-party collaboration in the face of enhanced competition with China. Intel's recent announcement that the chip manufacturer plans to invest \$20 billion in central Ohio semiconductor facilities, the largest economic development project in state history, will bolster U.S. national security and competitiveness on the world stage.

In Congress, passage of the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act, the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act and the targeted infrastructure package negotiated by Sen. Rob Portman, each send a message to China that America's domestic upkeep carries global ramifications. As a next step, Congress should immediately heed the call of Ohio's congressional delegation to fully fund the CHIPS For America Act, legislation that would further enable U.S. leadership in semiconductor chip manufacturing.

Meeting the evolving national security challenges posed by China require these kinds of investments in our economy, job growth, innovation and alliance building we have not seen since the height of our conflict with the Soviet Union. This cold war is not a choice. We have work to do to renew American strength, democracy and a brighter future for Ohio. America needs serious, engaged leaders willing to do it.

Opinion: US Senate race as much about the past as it is our future

[The Cincinnati Enquirer](#) | September 9, 2021

By Matt Dolan

This week marks the birthday of a proud son of Cincinnati, an American statesman and towering figure in the history of the Grand Old Party, "Mr. Republican" Robert A. Taft. From the 1930s through World War II and thereafter, Senator Taft led the conservative charge in response to liberal Democrats' Big Government philosophy in Washington, D.C.

Seven decades later, Ohio Republicans once again find themselves in need of a public leader willing to stand astride the widening chasm of Democratic socialism that threatens to swallow our personal freedom, liberties and the founding principles of the republic.

Rob Portman's forthcoming departure from the U.S. Senate is not just a moment to commemorate his service and pass the torch to the next occupant of the office, it's also an occasion to reflect upon our principles and the kind of leader Ohioans will have as their next senator. There are lessons we can glean from Senator Taft along with his line of recent successors.

In July, we celebrated John Glenn's 100th birthday, not as partisans, but as one state and nation indebted to his service. In addition to being a dedicated family man, Marine, Buckeye and astronaut, in 1974, Glenn was elected to the Senate seat once occupied by Robert Taft. A national hero beloved by many, Glenn retired in 1999 giving way to popular former Governor George Voinovich to take his place.

As senator, Voinovich used his public sector experience to quickly rise in national stature as an ardent debt hawk, defender of taxpayers and expert in foreign affairs, including the expansion of NATO. This strain of commonsense, results-driven conservatism that came to define Voinovich's legacy was carried on, uninterrupted, by Rob Portman.

This summer, Senator Portman played a lead role in crafting a long sought-after bill that modernizes America's aging infrastructure without raising taxes or increasing inflation. In accomplishing this, Portman proved his mettle in serving a cause greater than himself. And yet, the same cannot be said of the announced candidates lining up to replace him.

On the day that Portman's hard infrastructure bill passed, it was publicly opposed by every announced Republican candidate for U.S. Senate. They crowed about how they would have voted against a bill that would grant funding to fix the Brent Spence Bridge, finish the Appalachian Development Highway System, expand broadband for rural telehealth, education and farmers and strengthen the quality of regional treasures such as Lake Erie and Ohio's rivers. The bill would also provide thousands of local jobs, drive long-term economic growth and enhance our competitive standing with China.

As if declining \$12.3 billion in targeted infrastructure funding for Ohio wasn't bad enough, the candidates also operated in bad faith, seeking to falsely tie Portman's targeted infrastructure package to the reckless \$3.5 trillion liberal wish list bill to garner media hits. What Portman did was exactly what voters sent him to Congress to do: to make smart decisions that directly benefit our state while opposing out-of-control government spending that would fall squarely on taxpayers.

Earlier this summer, I launched the "Ohio Matters Tour" to weigh the prospect of a run for the U.S. Senate. I did this in part because it is clear that we live in a time when most politicians are more concerned with "fighting" rather than working for the Ohioans they claim to represent. Instead of lecturing Ohioans, we need someone who is willing to speak a little less and listen a little more.

Our state and nation presently face a complex and profound series of crises. From rising inflation and a migrant surge on our southern border, to the failed withdrawal and resulting national security and humanitarian catastrophe in Afghanistan, this moment calls for public leaders guided by the Constitution, their convictions and a willingness to get things done.

Instead of a desire to make history, the person who takes over for Rob Portman must grasp Ohio's history. That must begin with understanding the legacies and hard work of your predecessors and charting a course forward that is more focused on Ohio's future than your own.