



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Speaker Steve Montenegro (R-29)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

House Speaker Steve Montenegro Leads Charge with HB2855 & HCR2055 to Classify Drug Cartels as Terrorist Organizations

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – The Arizona House Republican Majority is taking bold action to secure our state and protect our citizens. Speaker Steve Montenegro is leading the charge with House Bill 2855 ([HB2855](#)) and House Concurrent Resolution 2055 ([HCR2055](#)), declaring drug cartels as terrorist organizations and empowering the Arizona Department of Homeland Security to take every action within its authority to combat these violent criminal enterprises.

“Arizona is on the frontlines of a war that Washington has refused to fight until President Trump arrived. These cartels are not just smuggling drugs; they are running sophisticated, brutal operations that profit off human misery—trafficking women and children, flooding our streets with fentanyl, and killing Americans at an unprecedented rate,” said Speaker Montenegro. **“This is a necessary step in our fight to defend Arizona communities, uphold the rule of law, and protect innocent lives.”**

The Reality Arizona Faces:

- Cartel violence is escalating—transnational criminal organizations control the import and distribution of deadly drugs like fentanyl, meth, and heroin.
- Terrorist threats are growing—from 2021 to 2023, U.S. Customs and Border Protection intercepted 282 individuals on the terrorist watchlist illegally entering the southwest border—a staggering 3033% increase over the prior three years.
- Fentanyl deaths are skyrocketing—seizures of the lethal drug at the border have nearly tripled, equating to billions of deadly doses flooding U.S. communities.

The legislation aligns directly with the [House Republican Majority Plan](#), which prioritizes public safety, protecting individual liberties, and preserving the American Dream. Arizonans overwhelmingly passed Proposition 314, sending a clear message that securing our border and stopping cartel-driven crime is a top priority. HB2855 and HCR2055 build on that mandate, recognizing the invasion-level threat these organizations pose and ensuring Arizona is equipped to respond.

Both measures passed by the House Judiciary Committee today and are advancing swiftly to a full House vote.

“Arizona House Republicans stand firm in our commitment to protect our state. We will take decisive action to secure our border, fight fentanyl, and stop the cartels that are waging war on our communities,” Speaker Montenegro added. **“Governor Hobbs vetoed this legislation in the last session, but with HB2855, we’re giving her another opportunity to do the right thing and sign it. If she refuses, Republicans will send HCR2055 to the Arizona voters—giving the people a direct say in the fight against drug cartels and the devastation they bring to our communities.”**

Steve Montenegro is the Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives and serves Legislative District 29 in the West Valley, Goodyear, and Surprise. Follow him on X at @SteveMontenegro.

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