

Families Gather in Washington, D.C. for Annual Rally Addressing Fentanyl Crisis Amid Federal Shutdown

Founder of advocacy group remains undeterred to call for change to end the number one cause of death for Americans ages 18-45

WASHINGTON DC, DC, UNITED STATES, October 13, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Families impacted by illicit fentanyl poisoning will convene at the northeast quadrant of the Washington Monument for the fifth annual [Lost Voices of Fentanyl](#) (LVOF) rally this Saturday, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Despite the federal government shutdown—which has frozen National Park Service event permits and denied access to staging, amplified sound, and conventional infrastructure—the rally will proceed as planned.

LVOF is a grassroots organization founded by families mourning the loss of children and loved ones to illicit fentanyl. Over the past five years, the organization has mobilized bereaved parents and advocates nationwide to raise awareness, demand legislative accountability, and press for urgent action in response to the escalating synthetic opioid epidemic.

After losing her son Austen to fentanyl poisoning in 2019, April Babcock, founder of LVOF, was compelled to act in the face of widespread inaction from elected officials at both the state and federal levels. In 2021, she established the advocacy group, channeling her grief into action while mobilizing families nationwide. The first rally in 2021 was held in Washington, D.C., in front of the Chinese embassy to protest its government's role in supplying precursor chemical to the Mexican cartels for manufacturing the deadly drug.

Attendees will arrive from across the U.S., carrying photographs, memorial banners, and



LOST VOICES OF FENTANYL

The days of crying behind closed doors are over!

Lost Voices of Fentanyl

personal signs as tangible symbols of loss. While formal infrastructure may be absent, Babcock believes the heart of the rally remains intact: survivors and advocates will share personal stories, amplify the magnitude of this crisis, and push for comprehensive prevention, intervention, and accountability measures at all levels of government.

In addition to family voices, the rally will feature two distinguished guest speakers:

- Derek S. Maltz, former Acting Administrator of the DEA and longtime law enforcement leader. After 28 years of service with the DEA, including leadership of its Special Operations Division and international coordination roles, Maltz brings deep insight into drug trafficking networks and federal enforcement strategies.

- Jaeson Jones, respected border intelligence specialist and authority on Mexican cartels. A retired captain from the Texas Department of Public Safety, Jones has led investigations into cartel leadership, worked with intelligence agencies on both sides of the border, and speaks regularly on the nexus of border security, trafficking, and cartel operations.

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Illicit fentanyl doesn't take a day off, and neither do the cartels and networks fueling its spread. Shutdown or not, this poison is killing Americans at record speed — we will not be turned away.”

April Babcock

“Whether a microphone is available or not, our mission continues,” said Babcock. “Illicit fentanyl doesn't take a day off, and neither do the cartels and networks fueling its spread. Shutdown or not, this poison is killing Americans at record speed—we will not be turned away.”

Though the rally must forgo formal infrastructure, participants will individually hold banners alongside their signs, ensuring that no voice is muted. Every speaker will stand, every memory will be honored, and every banner

and handheld posters displaying the names and faces of those lost will symbolize hundreds of thousands of lives and a crisis countless families believe is too large to ignore.

EVENT DETAILS

What: Lost Voices of Fentanyl – 5th Annual Rally

When: Saturday, October 18, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.



April Babcock-Founder, Lost Voices of Fentanyl

Where: Northeast Quadrant of the Washington Monument, Washington, D.C.

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Lost Voices of Fentanyl

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LVOF Rally 2023

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