



Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy  
Floor Speech

H.R. 5890, the *Assisting States' Implementation of the Plans of Safe Care Act (Garrett/Murphy)*  
June 13, 2018

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm proud to be the Democratic lead of this bipartisan bill, and I want to thank Mr. Garrett of Virginia for working with me on this legislation.

The purpose of our bill is to ensure that states have effective plans in place to protect infants who are innocent victims of the opioid epidemic. The bill aims to help Florida and other states develop evidence-based policies and procedures to properly care for babies born dependent on drugs.

Too many Americans—and too many Floridians—battle opioid addiction. As a mother, it breaks my heart to see innocent children suffer the consequences of adult addiction. We must do everything possible to ensure that drug-dependent babies receive proper care at the hospital and proper family, community and medical support once they are discharged.

There are an estimated 2.1 million Americans addicted to opioids, typically to prescription painkillers. Babies born to mothers who used opioids during pregnancy are at risk of an opioid-withdrawal condition called Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome. While there are common and effective ways to treat this syndrome, there are no uniform protocols.

Under federal law, states are required to develop a plan to safely care for infants exposed to substance abuse. However, a 2015 investigation by *Reuters* indicated that very few states have plans in place that fulfill this federal requirement. As a result, too many infants exposed to substance abuse, and the families responsible for these infants' care, are not receiving the comprehensive support they need.

Our bill seeks to address this problem. It would require HHS to provide guidance to states on how to implement safe and effective plans to care for infants born dependent on drugs.

It would ensure this guidance promotes evidence-based practices and encourages state governments to collaborate with health care providers, social service agencies, and other community stakeholders.

And it would ensure that HHS's guidance promotes family-centered treatment that seeks to keep families intact whenever possible.

Each year, thousands of babies in this country are born addicted to opioids, including about 4,000 in Florida alone.

These babies need our support. This bill seeks to provide it. I respectfully ask my colleagues to vote yes.