

Rep. Marino Withdraws from Drug Czar Position



Summary: After an investigative report put Rep. Tom Marino under a bad light, he withdrew his name from being considered for the drug czar job.

A Washington Post and “60 Minutes” investigation revealed troubling details about a lawmaker that President Donald Trump had nominated to run the Office of National Drug Control Policy. That nominee, Rep. Tom Marino, has now withdrawn his name from consideration for the job.

The investigation detailed how Marino helped guide legislation through Congress that will limit the Drug Enforcement Administration’s ability to seek after drug distributors even though there is a growing opioid problem in our country.

After the report was released on Monday, Democrats were quick to jump on Trump for his nomination of Marino and demanded his name be discarded. Trump agreed with their demands, tweeting Tuesday morning, “Rep. Tom Marino has informed me that he is withdrawing his name from consideration as drug czar. Tom is a fine man and a great Congressman!”

Trump would not go so far as to express support for Marino during a Monday news conference, simply stating, “we’re going to be looking into” it. Democrats and some Republicans have expressed a desire to have the law modified or repealed now that the report has dug up the information on it and that the drug distribution industry lobbied for it.

The 65-year-old Republican represents the 10th Congressional District of Pennsylvania. He won his spot in 2010 and has since won each term with at least 55 percent of the votes. He served as the U.S. attorney for the Middle District of Pennsylvania during the Bush administration and as a district attorney for Lycoming County. He had not announced any plan for reelection before this report came out and likely won’t know. He would be seeking a fifth term if he decides to run again. Marino currently serves on the Foreign Affairs, Homeland Security, and Judiciary committees.

Congressional Democrats are calling him part of the problem of corrupt and scandalized House Republicans. There is one currently under investigation by the Justice Department, another facing an ethics probe, and one more who had tasteless details of an affair surface, leading him to announce his retirement.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee said, “At this point, the whole House stinks and that will make it more difficult for House Republicans to defend their imperiled majority.”

Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin III of West Virginia was among the first to demand Marino’s name to be withdrawn from consideration. His state has been hard by the opioid crisis. He said, “We need a drug czar who has seen these devastating effects and who is passionate about ending this opioid epidemic. I look forward to working with President Trump to find a drug scar that will serve West Virginians and our entire country.”

The opioid problem has grown so large that Trump announced his intention to declare a national emergency next week. According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, drug overdose deaths are the leading cause of injury death in the country. In 2015, there were an estimated 12.5 million people that misused prescription opioids. Of that number, 2.1 million misused a prescription opioid for the first time. Just over 33,000 of those died from overdosing on opioids. Officials believe the numbers have only gotten worse in the past two years.

Why do you think there is an opioid crisis? Share your comments with us in the comments below.

To learn more about the opioid epidemic, read these articles:

- [Attorney General Jeff Sessions Enacts New Drug Crime Policy](#)
- [Addiction Experts Fear Abuse of Painkiller Ten Times Stronger Than Vicodin](#)
- [Addiction Problems Continue to Grow in Law Firms](#)

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