



Analysis: Trump-Putin bromance flowered, soured

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Illegal Chinese vapes funneled into U.S.



The supply chain ferrying illegal Chinese-made vapes into the United States mostly operates in plain sight.
PHOTOS BY CBP/HANDOUT VIA REUTERS

Analysis finds billions of dollars in imports unaccounted for

Emma Rumney, Kaylee Kang and Tom Polansek
REUTERS

CHICAGO – From an office a 15-minute drive from Chicago’s O’Hare International Airport, one small firm helped import millions of unauthorized Chinese-made vapes last year alone, forming a key link in the supply chain feeding U.S. demand for illegal e-cigarettes.

In a little over four years, the firm, a customs brokerage run by a man named Jay Kim, became a go-to broker for the Chinese vape industry. The firm worked on 60% of all shipments of vapes and vape parts from China to the United States in 2024 registered by the Food and Drug Administration, according to a Reuters analysis.

“A lot of them have FDA authorization,” Kim said in an interview in his office in April, referring to the vape shipments his firm handled.

However, FDA data on imports into the U.S. of FDA-regulated goods such as tobacco products or medicines showed the products Kim’s firm helped bring into the United States included unauthorized brands like Lost Mary and Geek Bar.

The FDA has declared those brands illegal to import or sell, warning their array of fruit and candy flavors may appeal to children. The agency says nicotine can harm developing brains and impact attention, learning and mood in young people, who can get hooked more easily on the addictive chemical.

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Unauthorized Chinese-made vapes were seized in a raid outside of Chicago by members of the Food and Drug Administration and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Advocates: Medicaid cuts could ‘collapse’ industries

Bethany Rodgers
USA TODAY NETWORK

Providers who care for disabled and aging Pennsylvanians are bracing for potential federal Medicaid cuts they say could push chronically underfunded services past the brink.

Advocates representing these workers say many of the services have suffered for years from funding stagnation or insufficient increases, fueling staffing shortages and depriving vulnerable Pennsylvanians of appropriate care.

Now, Congress is debating a tax package they say would deliver a devastating blow to these already-fragile systems by kicking an estimated 310,000 people out of Medicaid in the commonwealth and taking billions in federal funding away from the state.

“We’re in the fight of our life in Washington, D.C.,” said Sherri Landis, executive director of the Arc of Pennsylvania, a group that advocates for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

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‘El Chapo’ son pleads to role in cartel’s drug trafficking

Michael Loria
USA TODAY

CHICAGO – A son of Mexican drug lord Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzmán who oversaw drug shipments for his father and then took over one of the Sinaloa Cartel’s most vicious factions after El Chapo’s arrest pleaded guilty in federal court on July 11.

Ovidio Guzmán López, one of the four sons of El Chapo, admitted to his role in the notorious cartel’s drug trafficking operation at the Dirksen federal courthouse in downtown Chicago, a city where cartel members made key inroads with local dealers.

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