

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 21, 2008

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Financial Services & Gen. Govt.
184 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg
Washington, D.C. 20510-0001

The Honorable Sam Brownback
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Financial Services & Gen. Govt.
142 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg
Washington, D.C. 20510-0001

Dear Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member:

We are writing to request that you include \$235 million for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Program at the Office of National Drug Control Policy. The FY 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act included \$230 million for the HIDTA program. Unfortunately, funding has been reduced in the FY 2009 proposed budget by \$30 million, which would seriously impair a highly successful program that has made significant contributions to the disruption of the illegal drug trade in the United States.

The HIDTA Program is unique among federal grant programs. At the local level, HIDTAs are overseen by an Executive Board that is comprised of equal numbers of federal law enforcement officers and state/local law enforcement officers. These Executive Boards assess the drug trafficking threat in their areas, develop strategies to address that threat and fund multi-agency initiatives to carry out the strategy. The success of this approach is shown in the results.

In 2007, HIDTA-funded task forces were successful in disrupting or dismantling 2,660 Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs). In keeping with the statutory intent of the HIDTA Program, these were high value organizations that were having a significant harmful impact not only where they were based, but in other areas of the country as well. Two-thirds of the disrupted and dismantled DTOs were identified as part of international or multi-state operations, and almost one-fifth were part of an investigation designated as an Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) case, a designation assigned to regionally significant investigations.

In 2007, HIDTA initiatives seized approximately 3,855 tons of marijuana, 69 tons of cocaine, three tons of methamphetamine, almost a ton of heroin and smaller but significant amounts of a large number of other drugs. In total, the wholesale value of these drugs is conservatively valued at more than \$23.7 billion. In addition, HIDTA initiatives seized \$566 million in cash.

Over the past three years, HIDTAs have disrupted or dismantled more than 7,000 DTOs. In that time, they removed almost 9,000 tons of marijuana, 260 tons of cocaine, 18 tons of methamphetamine and four tons of heroin from the streets. The total value of the drugs, cash and asset seizures by HIDTAs is valued at more than \$50 billion.

Remarkably, these accomplishments have been achieved against the backdrop of an expanding program and flat funding. In 2002, there were 411 HIDTA-designated counties in the United States. With addition of the 26 new counties announced in February 2008, the total number of HIDTA counties is approximately 460, an increase of 13%. As these new counties come online, the HIDTA must fund initiatives in those areas or else their addition is a hollow gesture. However, the HIDTA Program appropriation has grown only by \$4 million or less than two percent during that period; an increase that does not account for the rising costs of salaries, equipment, vehicles and fuel

Again, we respectfully ask you to ensure the HIDTA Program receives \$235 million for FY 2009. Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

My Bunch

Chuck Grassley

Herb Kohl

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Chuck Schumer

John F. Kerry

Bob Casey, Jr.

Barack Obama

David Vitter

Ken Salazar

Carl Levin

Bo Ivin

Allen Bester

Mark Pryor

Maria Cantwell

Mark Feingold

Robert Menendez

Sam Hironaka

Patrick Leahy

Garry Keil

Mike Enzi

Chris Sun

Bob Latham

Frank R. Lautenberg

Shelley

Zorn Hawkins

Dennis Stein

Blanch L. Linsch

John Tost

Wm

John Johnson

Jay Ruppel

Bob Boyer