

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 9, 2017

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Mulvaney:

Every 16 minutes a person dies from an opioid-related overdose in the United States. Heroin, fentanyl, methamphetamine, and cocaine overdoses have claimed 438,314 lives since 2005. Given these statistics, we strongly urge you to protect the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and the programs funded through this agency, including the Drug Free Communities (DFC) program and the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program in the FY 2018 budget request. Eliminating critical prevention and enforcement programs would endanger our efforts to confront the drug overdose epidemic that has gripped our nation.

Healthcare, lost productivity and criminal justice costs associated with addiction are estimated to cost \$193 billion annually, whereas every \$1 invested in prevention yields a savings of up to \$10. Therefore we must invest in effective prevention programs, and continue to support the DFC program. Since its inception, the program has achieved statistically significant reductions in youth drug use. For example, an independent evaluation of the program found that among middle school students in DFC-funded communities, past 30-day use rates for prescription drugs and marijuana declined by 21.4% and 13.5%, respectively. Among high school students in DFC-funded communities, past 30-day use rates for prescription drugs and marijuana decreased by 14.5% and 4.4%, respectively.

We must also maintain strong law enforcement efforts to address the trafficking of these dangerous substances. The HIDTA program coordinates federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in designated areas, enabling them to effectively disrupt or dismantle drug trafficking organizations. In 2014

alone, the 28 existing HIDTAs dismantled 2,880 drug trafficking organizations, the majority of which were part of multi-state or international operations. In the process, HIDTAs seized more than \$1.1 billion dollars from drug traffickers, removed 2,447,885 kilos of illicit narcotics from the market, and provided intelligence assistance to more than 26,832 investigations.

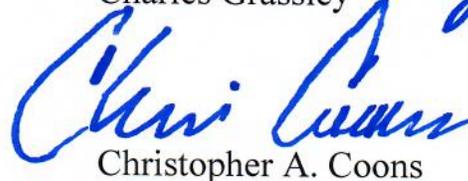
As you finalize the Administration's FY 2018 budget request, we strongly urge you to protect ONDCP and maintain the long-standing and effective programs that prevent and fight against the scourge of drug abuse that plagues our nation. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,


Dianne Feinstein


Charles Grassley


Richard Blumenthal


Christopher A. Coons


John Cornyn


Dick Durbin


Al Franken


Heidi Heitkamp


Mazie K. Hirono


Amy Klobuchar


Patrick Leahy


Rob Portman


Sheldon Whitehouse