

S.CON.RES.18

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), (Engrossed as Agreed to or Passed by Senate)

SEC. 518. SENSE OF THE SENATE SUPPORTING FUNDING FOR HIDTAS.

(a) *Findings.*--The Senate finds the following:

(1) The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program encompasses 28 strategic regions, 355 task forces, 53 intelligence centers, 4,428 Federal personnel, and 8,459 State and local personnel.

(2) The purposes of the HIDTA program are to reduce drug trafficking and drug production in designated areas in the United States by--

(A) facilitating cooperation among Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies to share information and implement coordinated enforcement activities;

(B) enhancing intelligence sharing among Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies;

(C) providing reliable intelligence to law enforcement agencies needed to design effective enforcement strategies and operations; and

(D) supporting coordinated law enforcement strategies which maximize use of available resources to reduce the supply of drugs in HIDTA designated areas.

(3) In 2004, HIDTA efforts resulted in disrupting or dismantling over 509 international, 711 multi-State, and 1,110 local drug trafficking organizations.

(4) In 2004, HIDTA instructors trained 21,893 students in cutting-edge practices to limit drug trafficking and manufacturing within their areas.

(5) The HIDTAs are the only drug enforcement coalitions that include equal partnership between Federal, State, and local law enforcement leaders executing a regional approach to achieving regional goals while pursuing a national mission.

(6) The proposed budget of \$100,000,000 for the HIDTA program is inadequate to effectively maintain all of the operations currently being supported.

(7) The proposed budget of \$100,000,000 for the HIDTA program would undermine the viability of this program and the efforts of law enforcement around the country to combat illegal drugs, particularly methamphetamine.

(b) *Sense of the Senate.*--It is the sense of the Senate that--

(1) the spending level of budget function 750 (Administration of Justice) is assumed to include \$227,000,000 for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas; and

(2) unless new legislation is enacted, it is assumed that the HIDTA program will remain with the Office of National Drug Control Policy, where Congress last authorized it to reside.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, this is very simple. It is to restore a cut in the HIDTA funding. HIDTA is called the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Administration. This is the major law enforcement mechanism. It covers lots of different law enforcement agencies, in the west, particularly rural areas, to fight methamphetamine. We need the resources to fight methamphetamine. Methamphetamine is probably the largest scourge in many rural parts of America. This is designed to enable us to have the resources to fight methamphetamine in our country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I suggest a voice vote on this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, on our side, we want to signal strong support for this amendment, and we can voice vote the amendment.

Sen. Baucus

Mr. President, I rise today to speak to an amendment with my good friend and colleague, Senator **GRASSLEY**, expressing the sense of the Senate on the High Intensity Drug Trafficking area, or HIDTA, program. My amendment assumes that the HIDTA program will be fully funded at \$227 million in fiscal year 2006 and that the HIDTA program will remain with the Office National Drug Control Policy, ONDCP, where it was last authorized by Congress to be. Additional cosponsors are Senators **LEAHY**, **BINGAMAN**, **MURRAY**, and **TALENT**. I would also like to add Senators **GORDON SMITH** and **DEWINE** as cosponsors to this amendment. I thank my colleagues for their strong support.

I am proud to offer this much-needed amendment. The proposed budget would cut the HIDTA program by 56 percent, assuming only \$100 million for HIDTA. The President's Budget also proposes to shift the program from ONDCP to the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force program within the Department of Justice. Both of these proposals could derail the highly successful HIDTA program.

As many of my colleagues know, methamphetamine is a powerful and highly addictive central nervous system stimulant that is associated with violence and crime. It can cause paranoia, aggression, and mood swings. The byproducts of making meth are highly toxic and flammable and require costly clean ups. They also endanger many children who are exposed when their parents cook meth within the home. Since its inception in 1990, HIDTA has become one of the most effective and comprehensive programs we have to fight meth.

Specifically, a HIDTA designation provides states like Montana with increased resources, information and intelligence to fight methamphetamine use and production. The Federal funding and increased cooperation among Federal, State and local law enforcement frees up state resources that allow, for example, the Montana Department of Justice to better support Montana's rural communities. It provides law enforcement officials with new technology to coordinate their efforts at the local, State, and Federal level.

Montana fought hard and successfully to join the Rocky Mountain HIDTA in 2002. Since that time, Montana has successfully cut the number of meth labs it busts in half. I have been told by law enforcement across my State that the proposed cuts to HIDTA, combined with cuts proposed by the President to other Justice assistance programs like the Byrne and COPS programs, would be a disaster for Montana. It would effectively end drug enforcement in rural Montana and would set the clock back years in our efforts to fight the rapid spread of meth in our state.

Yesterday, I was proud to cosponsor and support Senator **STABENOW**'s amendment to restore funding for our first responder programs, Byrne and COPS. Sadly, that amendment failed. I also proudly supported Senator **BIDEN**'s amendment to fully fund the COPS program. That amendment unfortunately also failed. We must do everything

we can to make sure these programs survive and so far Congress is not holding up their end of the bargain.

Although my amendment specifically focuses on the HIDTA program, let me list again what the Montana Board of Crime Control has told me would happen to Montana if the President's fiscal year 2006 budget is enacted:

1. Montana will lose its multi-jurisdiction drug enforcement capacity, including seven multijurisdictional drug task forces. This means that already stretched local law enforcement agencies will have to do what they can to address drug enforcement at the local level, without broader support from the drug task forces.

2. Montana will lose 33 drug enforcement offices throughout the State.

3. Montana will experience a significant increase in drug availability, manufacturing and trafficking and drug-related crime.

4. Montana would experience an increase in clandestine labs that manufacture methamphetamine.

5. Montana would experience a reduction in the amounts of illegal drugs and guns removed from our communities.

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6. Montana would experience the elimination of funds for rural law enforcement agencies' manpower, equipment and training.

Again, the above scenario is only the tip of the iceberg. The manufacturing, trafficking, drug addiction and crime will have a ripple effect throughout the State in our public health and correction systems and the courts, negatively affecting public safety and the quality of life in Montana and across the United States.

As the findings in the Baucus-Grassley amendment explain, the HIDTA program encompasses 28 strategic regions, 355 task forces, 53 intelligence centers, 4,428 Federal personnel, and 8,459 State and local personnel. In 2004, HIDTA efforts resulted in disrupting or dismantling over 509 international, 711 multi-State, and 1,110 local drug trafficking organizations. In 2004, HIDTA instructors trained 21,893 students in cutting-edge practices to limit drug trafficking and manufacturing within their areas.

The HDTAs are successful drug enforcement coalitions that include equal partnership among Federal, State, and local law enforcement leaders. This is what Congress created the HIDTA's to do--to provide coordination of drug enforcement efforts in critical regions of the country. That's why full funding for the HIDTA's is so important, and that's what the first part of the Baucus-Grassley sense of the Senate addresses--assuming that Congress will fully fund the HIDTA program at fiscal year 2005 levels.

The second part of the Baucus-Grassley Sense of the Senate on HIDTA would address the administration's decision to shift the HIDTA program from ONDCP to the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force, OCDETF, program within the Department of Justice. Moving the program from ONDCP to OCDETF is a mistake. The OCDETF program has a different mission and purpose than ONDCP and the HIDTA's. The HIDTA program has worked well at ONDCP and is a complement to the OCDETF mission. I do not understand why the Administration would want to shift it from its Congressionally authorized home within ONDCP.

Montana law enforcement tell me that moving the HIDTA program to OCDETF will do nothing to improve law enforcement capabilities and will undermine the unique partnerships and innovation that the HIDTA program has helped to create nationwide and that have been so successful in curbing the spread of meth in Montana. HIDTA's are about coordination and collaboration. OCDETF is more centrally managed, with an assumed Federal lead, and with a focus on investigation and prosecution--an important mission, but not the same as the HIDTA mission. Additionally, according to the National Narcotics Officers Association, the vast majority of OCDETF's cases originate within HIDTA funded operational task forces. The current organization works; why change it?

I urge my colleagues to support this important amendment. I also hope that we can adopt one of the many amendments that would actually increase funding for all Justice assistance programs, like Byrne and COPS, but this amendment is an important step in the right direction.

Sen. GRASSLEY.

Mr. President, I am pleased to rise today and join Senator **BAUCUS** and our colleagues in offering this Sense of the Senate resolution calling for full funding of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas program.

In all areas the President proposes and Congress disposes, and the budget is no different. While I support the President's efforts to control Federal spending to address the budget deficit, I have concerns about how some of his proposals would affect law enforcement efforts to identify, arrest, and prosecute drug trafficking organizations selling their poison to our kids and grand kids. I think it is critically important that we not hinder their ability to protect citizens, especially from the dangers of drugs.

In particular, the proposal to transfer to the Department of Justice and reduce the funding for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas program--also known as the HIDTA program--would have a major impact on drug enforcement efforts. With the continued growth of meth in Iowa and throughout the Midwest, we cannot afford to reduce programs designed to increase cooperation and coordination. Just as modern technology allows our businesses and our citizens to freely move around the country, the criminal element within the United States can take advantages of these same opportunities. That's why it is essential that they be able to work together, across jurisdictions, so that our laws against drug trafficking can be effectively enforced.

Congress provided the Office of National Drug Control Policy with the responsibility for the management--and effectiveness--of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas program. For a relatively modest investment, Federal, State, and local law enforcement have tremendously benefitted from the increased information sharing and improved coordination that HIDTAs create. The task forces created through the HIDTA program can serve as models for initiatives against terrorism, money laundering, and other modern threats to civil society.

This amendment is consistent with the views expressed by the Budget Committee. It is consistent with the views expressed in the legislation introduced last year to reauthorize the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

I hope that all of our colleagues will join us in supporting this amendment.