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National HIDTA Directors Association

The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Program Should Remain at ONDCP

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Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) Director John Walters has proposed transferring the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program from ONDCP's Office of State and Local Affairs (OSLA) to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). He has also recommended reducing funding from the FY06 level of \$227 million to \$208 million. These talking points address some of the reasons why the program should remain at ONDCP, and why these proposals have been met with strong opposition throughout the Nation.

- **The HIDTA Program is built on the premise that federal, state and local agencies should have an equal voice in managing their individual HIDTAs to address regional drug threats. ONDCP provides a neutral environment for this program to flourish.**
- **Moving the program from ONDCP to DOJ would create an imbalance of power in each HIDTA. Various DOJ agencies are directly involved in each HIDTA's executive board, and these agencies annually compete for scarce resources and funds with non-DOJ federal agencies, as well as state and local drug law enforcement organizations.**
- **ONDCP is better equipped to act as a neutral broker of HIDTA funding than DOJ since the Office does not maintain an enforcement arm, does not have representation on regional HIDTA executive committees, and does not compete for HIDTA funding in any way.**
- **HIDTA has demonstrated remarkable success at ONDCP's Office of State and Local Affairs. There is no sound rationale to move the program and potentially eliminate the very factors that have contributed to its effectiveness. Last year, Congress overwhelmingly rejected similar proposals put forth by ONDCP for the HIDTA Program. In a strikingly similar fashion, ONDCP failed to consult Congress about the FY 2007 budget recommendations.**

- **Transferring the HIDTA Program to DOJ isolates “majority stakeholders” in the program.**
 - **State and local law enforcement agencies invest approximately \$630 million of their own resources annually to support the \$227 million provided by ONDCP.**
 - **Most, if not all, of these stakeholders are opposed to moving the program from ONDCP and DOJ.**
 - **To add insult to injury, these majority stakeholders were not even consulted about this proposal.**
- **ONDCP coordinates the Nation’s efforts to eliminate the proliferation of illegal drugs and drug abuse. Its success is predicated on the results produced by the partnerships it creates and facilitates. HIDTA serves a very similar function with its federal, state and local partners. Its structure and function is an intentional “perfect fit” for ONDCP.**
- **ONDCP uses the HIDTA program as a primary vehicle for implementing its national policies and programs on critical issues, such as the National Methamphetamine Initiative and National Clandestine Laboratory Seizure System.**
- **The HIDTA program serves as a catalyst for promoting coordination and cooperation among all levels of criminal justice agencies, as well as among law enforcement, treatment, and prevention organizations. This function would likely disappear if the program moves to DOJ.**
- **The HIDTA Program has not received a funding increase since 1998. Despite having to accommodate inflation and cost of living increases for the past eight years, the program has achieved remarkable results.**

For more information, please contact Lisa Gibson, public affairs director for the National HIDTA Directors Association, at (703) 217-5888 or lwgllc@yahoo.com.