

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 24, 2017

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Financial Services and  
General Government  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chris Coons  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Financial Services and  
General Government  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Capito and Ranking Member Coons,

We appreciate your past support on law enforcement issues and strongly urge you to maintain resources for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program and fund it at \$254 million in fiscal year (FY) 2018, a level commensurate with FY 2017.

The HIDTA program has been crucial for state and local law enforcement in combating drug abuse in our nation's communities. With the addition of 18 new HIDTA counties in 2016, along with the implementation of the Heroin Response Strategy, an unprecedented partnership among regional HIDTA programs to address the severe prescription opioid, heroin, and fentanyl threats through public health-public safety partnerships, maintaining resources for the HIDTA program is critical.

The HIDTA program coordinates federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in designated areas, enabling them to effectively disrupt or dismantle drug trafficking organizations. One of the important hallmarks and strengths of the HIDTA program is its flexibility; creating the ability for each HIDTA to quickly redirect resources to address emerging threats that can be unique to their region. It also engages and provides support to state and federal prosecutors to successfully convict the individuals associated with these drug trafficking organizations.

According to the HIDTA 2016 Program Summary of Effectiveness, HIDTAs:

- Investigated more than 8,687 drug trafficking and money laundering organizations,
- Deconflicted 287,000 tactical operations among 3,025 law enforcement agencies,
- Seized 21,223 firearms and apprehended 50,923 fugitives, and
- Facilitated training for 77,913 criminal justice professionals.

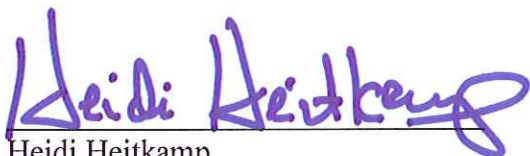
In addition to providing essential resources to law enforcement, HIDTA has continued its effectiveness in disrupting illegal markets by taking proceeds of illegal activity off the streets. In the past year, HIDTA seized \$17.3 billion in illicit drugs in a continuing effort to safeguard our

communities. Additionally, HIDTA seized \$547 million in illegally gained currency – more than double the amount of federal funds provided for the program. In removing \$17.3 billion wholesale value of illegal drugs from the marketplace in 2016, the return on investment equates to \$75.34 for every dollar of HIDTA invested. Clearly, the HIDTA program is cost effective in reducing drug availability and in promoting the public health and safety of our citizens

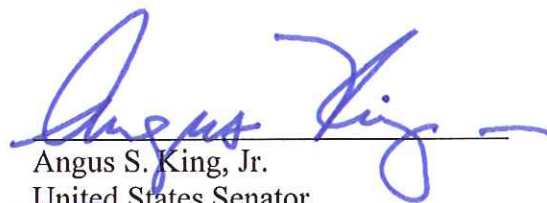
We have been dismayed to see the past presidential budget requests for HIDTA fall significantly short of their customary allocation in recent fiscal years. In light of the HIDTA program's effectiveness on the ground, the 18 counties that have been added to the program, and the fact that more than 60 percent of the country's population lives in a HIDTA area, we feel current discussions by the Administration to significantly reduce the program's budget – or eliminate the program altogether – would severely hamper law enforcement efforts to address drug trafficking amidst a nationwide opioid epidemic and would come at the expense of the safety and security of the communities participating in the program.

HIDTA has proven itself to be a fundamental component of this nation's efforts to combat drug trafficking and abuse. To maintain resources for the HIDTA program with the additional counties and to advance innovative approaches aimed at addressing our nation's principal drug threats, adequate funding is essential to continue and build upon its critical mission. Again, we thank you for your work on behalf of this important program and request strong funding support for FY 2018.

Sincerely,



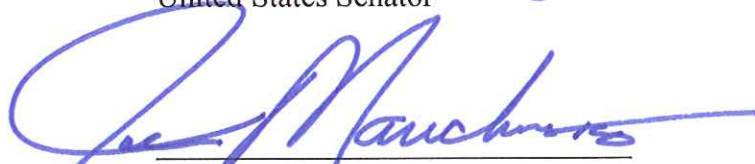
Heidi Heitkamp  
United States Senator



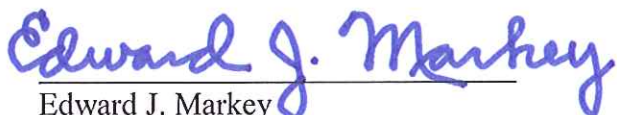
Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
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United States Senator

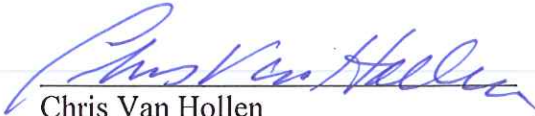




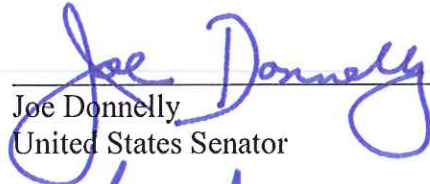
Richard Blumenthal  
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Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



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United States Senator



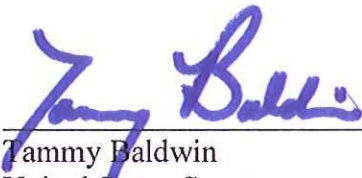
Joe Donnelly  
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Kirsten Gillibrand  
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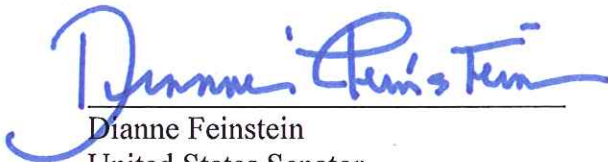
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Tom Udall  
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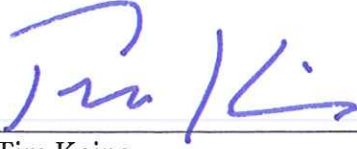
Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



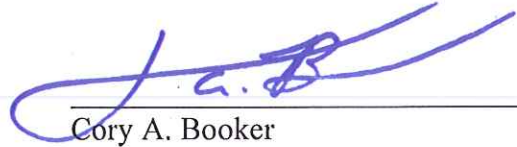
Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



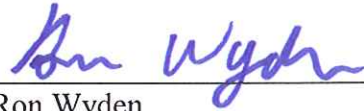
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