



FAIRBANKS POLICE DEPARTMENT

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The Honorable Nicholas Begich
1016 W. Sixth Ave Suite 406
Anchorage, Ak 99501

RE: Urgent Concerns Regarding FY2026 Budget Changes to HIDTA and ONDCP Oversight

Dear Congressman Begich,

I am a senior law enforcement executive responsible for ensuring public safety in Fairbanks, Alaska. I am writing to express my deep concern about the President's FY 2026 Budget proposal, specifically the proposal to move the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to the Department of Justice and to cut the program funding by 35%. I respectfully submit that this proposal will have the unintended consequence of weakening the President's vision to build a coordinated national public safety strategy.

The current structure of the 33 regional HIDTAs under ONDCP leadership is a proven model of collaborative policing that has saved lives, dismantled violent drug trafficking organizations, and built lasting partnerships among federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement. The unparalleled success of the HIDTA program is due to its regional autonomy, impartial executive board governance, and the independent oversight provided by ONDCP. HIDTA provides a unique platform for federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agency partnerships throughout the nation. The record of agency collaboration speaks for itself in Alaska HIDTA as it supports needed funding to 26 statewide agencies that participate in 9 strategic initiatives, 3 of which primarily focus on the enforcement efforts to disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking organizations supplying illicit drugs into our state.

Since 2018, the combined efforts of these HIDTA initiatives have intercepted and removed over 2.7 tons of illicit drugs with a street value worth of over 33 million dollars destined for Alaskan communities. Additionally, these initiatives have seized over 7 million dollars in drug proceeds through cash and asset forfeitures. The four top illicit drugs encountered by Alaska law enforcement, and impacting Alaskan communities are methamphetamine, fentanyl, cocaine, and heroin.



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Each HIDTA is led by an executive board that includes the key federal, state, and local law enforcement leaders in the region. This structure is especially important because it provides state and local leaders with an equal voice in designing and implementing the most effective public safety strategies to address the prevailing drug threats and related crimes of violence in their communities.

HIDTA invests in several key public safety partnerships, including disrupting and dismantling the drug trafficking and money laundering organizations and violent gangs; creating an intelligence sharing network for the timely and accurate sharing of information, in particular drug trafficking and gun violence intelligence, among law enforcement agencies across the country; apprehending America's most wanted fugitives across the world; providing tactical training for officers to help keep safe; as well as building public safety/public health partnerships to reduce drug overdoses and save lives.

ONDCP leads and coordinates the nation's drug policy so that it improves the health and lives of the American people. The retention of the multi-faceted HIDTA program under ONDCP is essential to achieve the President's key drug policy priorities and public safety vision for America.

Simply put, this is not the time to weaken the nation's most effective multi-agency framework for addressing the threats posed by cartel-driven drug trafficking. Law enforcement professionals across the country—and especially in the State of Alaska are confronted by multiple high crime categories that are fueled by our drug problem. I cannot express how important it is for Congress to preserve ONDCP's authority over HIDTA and fully fund the HIDTA program.

I respectfully request your leadership in advocating for a reversal of this budget proposal. Your support will help ensure that federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies retain the tools, partnerships, and autonomy required to safeguard our communities.

Sincerely,



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