



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

HALL OF JUSTICE

ROBERT G. LUNA, SHERIFF



June 23, 2025

The Honorable Linda Sanchez
Representative in Congress
15111 Whittier Boulevard, Suite 220
Whittier, California 90603

Dear Representative Sanchez:

**URGENT CONCERNS REGARDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2026
BUDGET PROPOSAL AFFECTING HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREAS
AND WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY OVERSIGHT**

As the Sheriff of Los Angeles County, I am charged with protecting over ten million residents across one of the most populous and diverse counties in the nation. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is the largest sheriff's agency and the third largest local law enforcement agency in the United States. Among our many responsibilities is the investigation of narcotics-related crimes, including drug trafficking and overdose deaths, with a dedicated task force addressing the devastating rise in fentanyl fatalities.

I am writing to express my strong concern about the President's Fiscal Year 2026 budget proposal, specifically the plan to transfer the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to the Department of Justice (DOJ), while also reducing HIDTA funding by 35 percent. I respectfully urge Congress to reject this proposal, as it would significantly undermine the President's broader goals of creating a unified and effective national drug policy as well as enhancing public safety.

The current structure of the 33 regional HIDTAs, operating under the leadership of the ONDCP, has proven to be one of the country's most effective models for collaborative law enforcement. This structure ensures regional autonomy, balanced governance through an executive board, and independent federal oversight which are elements critical to the program's success. The HIDTA model promotes unprecedented collaboration among federal, state, local, and tribal partners, leading to measurable outcomes such as dismantling violent drug

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trafficking organizations, interrupting money laundering operations, reducing overdose deaths, and fostering public safety and public health partnerships that save lives.

In Los Angeles County, the HIDTA program has been instrumental in coordinating multi-agency efforts to investigate fentanyl-related deaths and disrupt the networks responsible for distributing lethal narcotics in our communities. Our close partnership with the Los Angeles HIDTA ensures that local voices help shape regional strategies, allowing for tailored, effective responses to rapidly evolving drug threats.

This proposal to move HIDTA to the DOJ and significantly reduce its funding would threaten the partnerships and operational flexibility that have made the program successful. It risks replacing proven, locally informed strategies with a more centralized, less responsive framework that may not reflect the on-the-ground realities of each region.

The ONDCP plays a vital role in shaping and coordinating national drug policy. Retaining HIDTA within the ONDCP is critical to maintaining a multidimensional approach that aligns law enforcement and public health responses which is a necessity in the ongoing battle against fentanyl and other illicit substances.

Now is not the time to weaken our nation's most effective drug enforcement coordination model. On behalf of the law enforcement professionals in Los Angeles County and across the country, I urge Congress to maintain ONDCP's authority over HIDTA and fully fund the program.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to public safety. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Acting Captain Robert J. Dean of the Narcotics Bureau at (562) 946-7101.

Sincerely,



ROBERT G. LUNA
SHERIFF