

STATE OF KANSAS



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GOVERNOR LAURA KELLY

June 17, 2025

The Honorable Dave Joyce, Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Joyce, Ranking Member Hoyer, and Members of the Subcommittee:

As Governor of the State of Kansas, and on behalf of the Kansas law enforcement community, I respectfully urge the Subcommittee to oppose the proposed transfer of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking (HIDTA) Program from the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to the Department of Justice (DOJ), specifically under the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), as outlined in the Administration's FY 2026 Budget Proposal.

The Midwest HIDTA Executive Board is comprised of senior law enforcement leaders from six states, including North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri. They are uniquely positioned to assess and respond to the evolving drug threats that affect not only Kansas communities, but those communities represented by every Member of Congress.

The proposed changes outlined in the FY 2026 Budget will have negative implications for Kansas and every Congressional district, as the HIDTA program provides direct support to state and local law enforcement across the country.

The HIDTA Program is a model for federal, state, and local collaboration, enabling stakeholders to address complex drug trafficking challenges with agility, precision, and strategic alignment. Its current placement within ONDCP allows for a neutral, non-operational federal role that supports regional Executive Boards in setting priorities, allocating resources, and ensuring accountability based on local conditions. This structure has proven effective in both urban and rural settings, including throughout 14 designated counties in Kansas.

The proposed transfer raises several significant concerns:

1. **Loss of State and Local Autonomy:** OJP is a grants administration office—not a drug enforcement agency, not an education and prevention entity, and not a rehabilitation and recovery provider. Moving HIDTA under the DOJ risks centralizing authority in a way that undermines locally driven strategies critical to our response to emerging threats.
2. **Disruption to Interagency Coordination:** HIDTA's balanced partnership model ensures that federal, state, local, and tribal agencies work in unison. Under DOJ oversight, there is real concern that federal operational priorities could eclipse successful, locally-led enforcement, recovery, and educational approaches.

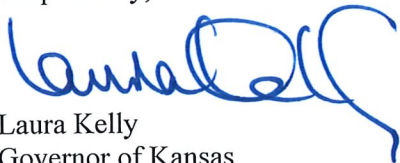
3. **Operational Instability:** HIDTA-funded task forces are engaged in long-term, multi-jurisdictional investigations. Changes to funding streams or oversight procedures could disrupt ongoing operations and compromise public safety outcomes.
4. **Fragmentation of Public Health Partnerships:** HIDTA plays a critical role in uniting law enforcement with public health. Initiatives like the Overdose Response Strategy—which eliminates silos between law enforcement and public health professionals—could lose cohesion under a DOJ framework.
5. **No Clear Problem Justifying Change:** The current HIDTA structure enjoys broad bipartisan support, a clean audit record, and a demonstrated track record of success—especially in rural states. Transitioning to an untested model introduces risk without any demonstrated benefit. We should not fix what isn't broken.
6. **Defunding the Police:** The proposal includes a 35% reduction in the national HIDTA budget. Over 90% of the Midwest region's budget, including Kansas, Missouri, and Iowa, is allocated directly to state and local entities. This means approximately \$5 million less for the Midwest HIDTA, and a rescission of over \$1 million to Kansas alone.

Simply put, the proposal would dismantle a proven, regionally adaptive system in favor of a centralized model with uncertain outcomes.

I ask the Subcommittee to preserve the HIDTA Program under ONDCP, where it can continue to operate with the flexibility, autonomy, and accountability that made it a vital tool in our nation's fight against addiction and drug trafficking.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to supporting law enforcement professionals who work tirelessly to keep our communities safe.

Respectfully,



Laura Kelly
Governor of Kansas

Cc:

Representative Steve Womack (AR)
Representative Mark Amodei (NV)
Representative Ashley Hinson (IA)
Representative Michael Cloud (TX)
Representative Chuck Edwards (NC)
Representative Mark Alford (MO)
Representative Sanford Bishop, Jr. (GA)

Representative Nick LaLota, Vice Chair (NY)
Representative Steny Hoyer (MD)
Representative Mark Pocan (WI)
Representative Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (WA)
Representative Glenn Ivey (MD)
Representative Dave Joyce, Chairman (OH)