

Macomb County

Office of the Sheriff

ANTHONY WICKERSHAM
SHERIFF

Elizabeth J. Darga
Undersheriff

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Commander

June 9, 2025

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 521
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

REQUEST TO FULLY FUND HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREAS

Dear Chairman Moran:

I currently serve as an Executive Board Member of the Michigan High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA). I am writing to express my strong support for maintaining current funding levels for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program and to oppose the proposed \$102.6 million reduction in the President's Budget. The HIDTA program is essential to the safety and well-being of communities throughout the United States. While this proposed reduction represents a significant cut, it also accompanies a shift in oversight, with the Administration proposing that HIDTA move from the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (OJP), which we also oppose.

The HIDTA program, established in 1988, coordinates and assists federal, state, local, Tribal, and territorial law enforcement agencies to address regional drug threats and reduce illicit drug production and trafficking. By facilitating cooperation, sharing intelligence, and supporting coordinated enforcement strategies, HIDTA has proven indispensable in disrupting illegal drug markets and dismantling trafficking organizations.

The 2025 enacted funding level of HIDTA allocated \$298,579,000 to the program, of which 90 percent of those funds were directly utilized to support state and local law enforcement and task force operations. In the Michigan HIDTA Area of Responsibility (AOR), there are 25 federal, state, local, and tribal task forces which comprise of more than 750 analysts, officers, deputies, troopers, and agents. They work tirelessly combatting major drug trafficking organizations, money laundering organizations, and the violent crime associated with drug trafficking.

Being a border region, it is imperative to maintain funding to support the local staffing of law enforcement, intelligence, prosecutors, demand reduction specialists and support positions. Cutting HIDTA funding would undermine our ability to respond effectively to the evolving threats posed by drug trafficking, which not only harms regions but also has harmful spillover effects on surrounding areas and the country as a whole.

Furthermore, the Michigan HIDTA Investigative Support and Deconfliction Center (ISDC) is the only entity in the State of Michigan which conducts case/event deconfliction and case matching to identify separate law enforcement organizations investigating the same subject, residence, or entity, and make notification to those organizations so information can be shared, and investigative efforts not duplicated. This also ensures there are no "blue on blue" events where two or more law enforcement agencies converge on the same target. This is a one-of-a-kind officer safety program only offered by the HIDTA program.

The program's success relies on its capacity to provide reliable law enforcement intelligence and support coordinated operations that maximize the use of available resources. A reduction in funding would jeopardize these efforts and make it harder for law enforcement agencies to protect our communities.

A shift to OJP, as proposed in the budget, would hinder the dynamic and responsive management approach to HIDTA executive boards so they are able to design and carry out activities that reflect the specific drug trafficking threats found in each HIDTA region. This discretion ensures that each HIDTA Executive Board can tailor its strategy and initiatives to effectively respond to local threats. Moving HIDTA to OJP would impose constraints by having it under a federal agency.

As a law enforcement executive committed to dismantling illegal drug trafficking, I urge you to advocate for maintaining the current level of funding for the HIDTA program and its oversight under the Office of National Drug Control Policy. HIDTA is a crucial investment in the safety and security of the American people.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Respectfully,



Sheriff Anthony M. Wickersham
Macomb County Sheriff's Office
Executive Board Member
Michigan High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA)