



WI Badger State Sheriffs' Association, Inc.

An Association of Wisconsin Sheriffs
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Todd J. Delain
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The Honorable Congressman Bryan Steil
1526 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Steil,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposed FY2026 federal budget changes to the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program, specifically the 35% reduction in funding and the proposed transfer of HIDTA from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to the Department of Justice (DOJ).

These changes, while perhaps well-intended, would have serious and unintended consequences that would diminish the effectiveness of one of our nation's most successful, collaborative and data-driven responses to drug trafficking and abuse. HIDTA's unparalleled success lies in its unique structure: regional autonomy, impartial executive board governance and independent oversight by ONDCP. This framework fosters true agency neutrality and allows for comprehensive partnerships between federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies. HIDTA is not an agency—it is a collaborative platform designed solely to facilitate coordination and results.

The proposed relocation to DOJ would compromise HIDTA's neutrality and risk transforming it into a program beholden to the priorities of a single agency. Such a shift would hinder the effective intelligence sharing, deconfliction and operational coordination that have made the program such a success.

The North Central HIDTA, which covers eight counties in Wisconsin and nine counties in Minnesota, is a prime example of this success. In 2024 alone, our region:

- Seized over \$67.8 million worth of illicit drugs
- Seized 1,560 crime guns
- Made 4,759 arrests

- Disrupted or dismantled 80 Drug Trafficking Organizations
- Seized approximately 1,700 kilograms of methamphetamine
- Seized approximately 2.2 million fentanyl pills
- Seized approximately 473 kilograms of cocaine

These accomplishments were achieved through a coalition of over 150 federal, state, local and tribal partner agencies. Our HIDTA region achieves a return on investment of \$10.36 for every federal dollar invested, a clear testament to its efficacy and impact.

The HIDTA program's multi-disciplinary, holistic strategy is critical in today's fight against drugs. The HIDTA Overdose Response Strategy in particular, aids in overall public health and is an innovative initiative that reflects this adaptability and responsiveness to evolving drug threats. Furthermore, HIDTA's intelligence support centers and deconfliction systems ensure officer safety and operational efficiency, which are vital in today's complex law enforcement environment.

The ONDCP plays a vital role in setting a balanced national drug control strategy that includes prevention, treatment and enforcement. Housing HIDTA within ONDCP ensures that drug policy remains neutral, strategic and multi-faceted—precisely what the nation needs amid the ongoing opioid crisis and the rise of synthetic drugs like fentanyl.

I respectfully request your leadership in advocating for the full restoration of HIDTA funding and the continued placement of this program within the ONDCP. The retention of HIDTA under ONDCP is not just a matter of bureaucracy, it is critical to preserving the partnerships, structure and autonomy that make this program indispensable to our nation's public safety and health strategies.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and for your continued commitment to the safety and well-being of our communities.

Sincerely,



Todd J. Delain

Sheriff of Brown County

President of the Wisconsin Badger State Sheriffs' Association