



Eau Claire
POLICE
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Matt Rokus, Chief of Police
721 Oxford Avenue, Suite 1400
Eau Claire, WI 54703

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Senator
United States Senate
141 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Opposition to the Proposed Budget Cuts and Transfer of the HIDTA Program (FY 2026 Budget Proposal)

Dear Senator Baldwin,

I am writing to express the Eau Claire Police Department's concern regarding the proposed 35% budget cut to the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program and the potential transfer of the program from the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to the Department of Justice (DOJ). These changes would significantly undermine public safety and drug enforcement efforts across the country, with particularly severe consequences for communities in Wisconsin.

The North Central HIDTA, which serves multiple counties in Minnesota and Wisconsin, is a proven model of the program's effectiveness. In 2024 alone, this regional HIDTA seized over \$67.8 million worth of illicit drugs, removed 1,560 illegally possessed firearms, and made nearly 4,800 arrests, while dismantling 80 Drug Trafficking Organizations. Funding reduction would severely curtail these efforts and jeopardize support for critical functions such as overtime, intelligence analysis, investigative coordination, and collaboration among more than 150 federal, state, local, and tribal partner agencies.

Equally troubling is the proposed administrative shift of HIDTA from ONDCP to DOJ. HIDTA's current placement within ONDCP ensures balanced, neutral oversight that gives equal voice to all levels of law enforcement. Transferring HIDTA to DOJ would risk diminishing local control, and transform a collaborative, evidence-based approach into a top-down federal directive. Such a shift would compromise the very structure that has made HIDTA so adaptable and responsive to the unique needs of our communities.

We respectfully urge you to carefully consider the consequences of these proposed changes. HIDTA's value lies in its ability to unify all stakeholders in a neutral and cooperative structure. Maintaining this structure and funding is essential to sustaining public safety.

Sincerely,

Ben Frederick
Deputy Chief
Eau Claire Police Department

Derek Thomas
Deputy Chief

Ben Frederick
Deputy Chief

Kelly Thompson
Administration

Greg Rosno
Communications Center