



Sheriff Curtis N. Fell
ROCK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Jude G. Maurer, Chief Deputy



Aaron K. Burdick
Commander, Law Enforcement Services

"A Tradition of Service"

Kimberly A. Litsheim
Commander, Correctional Services

June 17, 2025

U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin
141 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Urgent Concerns Regarding FY2026 Budget Changes to HIDTA and ONDCP Oversight

Dear Senator Baldwin,

I am the Sheriff of Rock County, who is responsible for ensuring public safety in Rock County, Wisconsin. I am writing to express my deep concern about the President's FY 2026 Budget proposal, specifically the proposal to move the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to the Department of Justice and to cut the program funding by 35%. I respectfully submit that this proposal will have the unintended consequence of weakening the vision to build a coordinated national public safety strategy.

The current structure of the 33 regional HIDTAs under ONDCP leadership is a proven model of collaborative policing that has saved lives, dismantled violent drug trafficking organizations, and built lasting partnerships among federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement. The unparalleled success of the HIDTA program is due to its regional autonomy, impartial executive board governance, and the independent oversight provided by ONDCP. HIDTA provides a unique platform for federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agency partnerships throughout the nation.

Each HIDTA is led by an executive board that includes the key federal, state, and local law enforcement leaders in the region. This structure is especially important because it provides state and local leaders with an equal voice in designing and implementing the most effective public safety strategies to address the prevailing drug threats and related crimes of violence in their communities. The North Central HIDTA directly supports 17 counties and more than 150 law enforcement agencies in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

HIDTA invests in several key public safety partnerships, including disrupting and dismantling the drug trafficking and money laundering organizations and violent gangs; creating an intelligence sharing network for the timely and accurate sharing of information, in particular drug trafficking and gun violence intelligence, among law enforcement agencies across the country; apprehending America's most wanted fugitives across the world; providing tactical training for officers to help keep safe; as well as building public safety/public health partnerships to reduce drug overdoses and save lives. In 2024, over



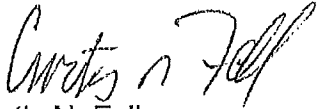
\$8 million in funding to North Central HIDTA helped our state and local task forces disrupt or dismantle 80 drug trafficking organizations, seize over 2.2 million fentanyl pills, 1,700 kilograms of methamphetamine, 473 kilograms of cocaine and more than 1,600 crime guns. Nearly 4,800 traffickers and violent offenders were arrested as well as recovering more than \$77 million in drug-related assets.

ONDCP leads and coordinates the nation's drug policy so that it improves the health and lives of the American people. The retention of the multi-faceted HIDTA program under ONDCP is essential to achieve the drug policy priority and public safety vision for America.

Simply put, this is not the time to weaken the nation's most effective multi-agency framework for addressing the threats posed by cartel-driven drug trafficking. Law enforcement professionals across the country—and especially in Rock County, Wisconsin, like ours—urge Congress to preserve ONDCP's authority over HIDTA and fully fund the HIDTA program.

I respectfully request your leadership in advocating for a reversal of this budget proposal. Your support will help ensure that federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies retain the tools, partnerships, and autonomy required to safeguard our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curtis N. Fell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Curtis" being more prominent and the last name "Fell" following in a similar style.

Curtis N. Fell
Sheriff