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June 11, 2025

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Office of Senator Lisa Blunt Rochester
555 East Loockerman St, Suite 300
Dover, DE 19901

Senator Blunt Rochester,

I write to you with deep concern about the President's FY2026 Budget proposal, specifically its call to relocate the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to the U.S. Department of Justice, and to cut the program's funding by 35%. I ask that you to oppose this proposal and preserve both the integrity and the autonomy of the HIDTA program.

The current structure of the 33 regional HIDTAs under ONDCP's independent oversight has been a national success story. It has built enduring federal, state, and local law enforcement partnerships that save lives, dismantle violent drug trafficking organizations, and support public health responses to the national substance use disorder crisis. The Liberty Mid-Atlantic HIDTA, which serves Delaware, exemplifies this success: in 2024 alone, it supported 31 law enforcement and intelligence initiatives and helped seize over \$102 million in narcotics and criminal assets.

Delaware has long been an active and invested partner in the HIDTA program. In 2015, New Castle County was designated a HIDTA region, acknowledging the state's high risk of drug trafficking and violence associated with illicit narcotics. The Delaware Department of Justice currently has two full-time positions and several key public safety initiatives funded through the HIDTA program. These resources support coordinated intelligence-sharing, gun violence reduction work, and drug trafficking prevention efforts across state lines.

The program's effectiveness is inseparable from its design: it is governed regionally by executive boards composed equally of local, state, and federal law enforcement, which ensures every agency, large or small, has a meaningful voice.

Keeping HIDTA within ONDCP, which is a policy coordination body rather than a law enforcement agency, ensures the program remains impartial, balanced, and focused on public safety and health.

Relocating the program to the U.S. DOJ risks politicizing its governance, disrupting hard-won interagency trust, and undermining its public health collaborations—especially as Delaware

continues to face a wave of overdose poisoning deaths and drug-related violence. We cannot afford to weaken one of our most effective tools.

I respectfully urge you to advocate for the full restoration of HIDTA funding and to oppose any structural changes that would erode ONDCP's leadership over the program. Your support will help preserve a proven model for collaborative drug enforcement and community safety in Delaware and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kathy Jennings". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kathy" and last name "Jennings" clearly distinguishable.

Kathy Jennings
Attorney General of Delaware