



ARIZONA SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

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DAVID CLOUSE, NAVAJO COUNTY SHERIFF, PRESIDENT
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THE ARIZONA SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION IS THE ONE UNITED CREDIBLE VOICE REPRESENTING LAW ENFORCEMENT
AND PUBLIC SAFETY FOR THE COUNTIES OF ARIZONA

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August 6, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump

President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Mike Johnson

Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune

Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program: A Proven Model for Border Security, Government Efficiency, and Collaborative Law Enforcement

Dear Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, and Leader Thune:

As Arizona's elected sheriffs, including those responsible for counties along the Southwest Border and the major transportation corridors extending from it, we write to express our strong support for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Program. Arizona is on the front line of confronting fentanyl, methamphetamine, other illicit drugs, criminal proceeds, money laundering networks, and transnational criminal organizations that move through our state and threaten communities throughout the United States.

We respectfully encourage the Administration and Congress to continue strengthening this proven partnership by maintaining HIDTA within the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), preserving its balanced governance model, providing full, stable, and timely funding, and recognizing HIDTA as a cornerstone of America's border security, homeland security, and public safety strategy.

Sophisticated transnational criminal organizations do not operate within jurisdictional boundaries. They exploit international borders, interstate highways, financial systems, communications technology, and gaps among different levels of government. Dismantling these organizations

requires more than isolated investigations. It requires federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to combine their authorities, intelligence, personnel, and expertise under a shared regional strategy.

For nearly four decades, HIDTA has provided the framework necessary to accomplish that mission.

HIDTA is not simply another federal grant program or an additional federal task force. It is the **nation's premier regional law enforcement partnership**, bringing together federal, state, local, and tribal agencies under a shared governance model to combat drug trafficking organizations, money laundering networks, and transnational criminal enterprises. It enables existing federal, state, local, and tribal agencies to operate as a coordinated public safety enterprise while preserving each agency's authorities and responsibilities. Through HIDTA, law enforcement leaders jointly identify regional threats, establish operational priorities, share intelligence, deconflict investigations, and direct resources where they will have the greatest impact. This structure reduces duplication, strengthens accountability, and ensures that federal investments support, not supplant, the agencies already protecting our communities.

The Arizona HIDTA demonstrates the reach and operational value of this model. Ten of Arizona's 15 counties are currently designated as HIDTA counties, and others are expected to seek designation. Arizona HIDTA includes 804 full-time and 38 part-time participants from 92 law enforcement agencies and supports 24 multi-agency enforcement task forces, 13 of which are led by state or local agencies and 11 led by federal agencies. These task forces investigate drug trafficking and money laundering organizations, many of which have direct ties to sources of supply in Mexico and operate well beyond Arizona's borders.

Arizona HIDTA also provides capabilities that many agencies, particularly rural sheriffs' offices, could not independently sustain. Through Investigative Support Centers in Phoenix and Tucson, analysts assist with intelligence development, wiretap investigations, digital evidence exploitation, deconfliction, interdiction operations, financial investigations, and connections among related cases and criminal organizations. Arizona HIDTA supports 52 law enforcement positions, including 12 prosecutors serving the Arizona Attorney General's Office and county attorneys across the state, and maintains shared operational facilities where federal, state, and local personnel can work side by side. These resources enable local agencies to participate meaningfully in complex investigations that would otherwise exceed their individual capacity and complement the work of the Administration's Homeland Security Task Forces.

The governance structure supporting these operations is fundamental to HIDTA's success. The Arizona HIDTA Executive Board is composed equally of federal and state and local law enforcement leaders. Regional priorities are therefore established by the professionals confronting these threats every day, while ONDCP provides strategic coordination, oversight, and accountability. Because ONDCP is positioned above the mission of any single enforcement agency, it can serve as a neutral coordinating body and ensure that no individual department's institutional priorities displace the needs of the broader region.

One of HIDTA's greatest strengths is that it preserves local operational leadership while leveraging the unique authorities, intelligence, and resources of the federal government. Regional

priorities are established by the law enforcement leaders closest to the threats they confront, ensuring that resources are directed where they will have the greatest operational impact. At the same time, federal agencies contribute specialized capabilities and national coordination to address criminal organizations that operate across county, state, tribal, and international boundaries. Maintaining HIDTA within ONDCP preserves this balanced partnership, ensuring that operational decisions remain locally informed, federally supported, and focused on achieving the greatest public safety outcomes.

The results demonstrate the value of this approach. In 2025 alone, Arizona HIDTA task forces **investigated 74 drug trafficking organizations and 11 money laundering organizations**, the majority of which had direct ties to sources of supply in Mexico. Ninety-three percent of Arizona HIDTA funding directly supports state and local law enforcement, strengthening investigative capacity, sustaining specialized task forces, supporting prosecutors, and providing intelligence and technical capabilities that benefit agencies throughout the state.

The national results are equally compelling. In 2025, **HIDTA task forces removed approximately \$21.6 billion in illicit drugs** from American communities and **disrupted or dismantled 3,383 drug trafficking and money laundering organizations**. The national **HIDTA Program generated a return on investment of \$82.78 for every federal dollar invested**, making it one of the federal government's highest-return public safety partnerships.

These results extend well beyond the jurisdictions in which HIDTA investigations originate. Criminal organizations operating through Arizona distribute illicit drugs and move criminal proceeds across the country. Investigations and intelligence developed here help identify national networks, disrupt sources of supply, dismantle financial operations, and prevent criminal enterprises from expanding deeper into the United States. Arizona's experience reinforces a fundamental reality: border security, public safety, and national security are inseparable.

As the Administration and Congress work to secure America's borders, dismantle transnational criminal organizations, combat fentanyl trafficking, disrupt cartel finances, and improve the efficiency of the federal government, HIDTA offers a proven model for advancing each of those priorities. It enables agencies to eliminate unnecessary duplication, directs resources according to regional threats, empowers decisions by those closest to the problem, and delivers measurable results for taxpayers.

For these reasons, the Arizona Sheriffs' Association respectfully urges the Administration and Congress to:

- Maintain HIDTA within the Office of National Drug Control Policy and preserve ONDCP's neutral coordinating role.
- Protect HIDTA's governance model, which provides equal federal and state and local representation and ensures regional priorities guide operational decisions.
- Provide full and stable funding for the HIDTA Program so participating agencies can continue the collaborative capabilities necessary to dismantle sophisticated transnational criminal organizations.

The threats confronting our nation demand partnerships capable of operating across jurisdictional boundaries without sacrificing local knowledge, accountability, or operational flexibility. HIDTA has shown for nearly forty years that federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement can work under shared leadership to achieve results no agency could produce independently.

The elected sheriffs of Arizona stand ready to continue working alongside the Administration, Congress, ONDCP, and our federal partners to strengthen this nationally proven model. We appreciate your leadership and your commitment to ensuring that law enforcement has the resources, partnerships, and operational framework necessary to protect our communities, secure our borders, and keep our country safe.

Respectfully,



Sheriff David Clouse
Navajo County Sheriff
Arizona Sheriffs' Association President



William Ponce
La Paz County Sheriff
Arizona Sheriffs' Association Vice President



Joe Dedman
Apache County Sheriff



Mark Dannels
Cochise County Sheriff



Bret Axlund
Coconino County Sheriff



PJ Shepherd
Gila County Sheriff



Allred
Graham County Sheriff



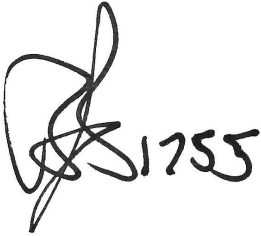
Eric Ellison
Greenlee County Sheriff

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Sheridan".

Jerry Sheridan
Maricopa County Sheriff

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Schuster".

Schuster
Mohave County Sheriff

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russ Teeple".

Russ Teeple
Pinal County Sheriff

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Rhodes".

David Rhodes
Yavapai County Sheriff

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Leon Wilmot".

Leon Wilmot
Yuma County Sheriff

Courtesy Copies Executive Branch

- The Honorable J.D. Vance, Vice President of the United States
- The Honorable Todd Blanche, Attorney General of the United States
- The Honorable Markwayne Mullin, Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- The Honorable Sara Carter, Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy

Congressional Leadership

- The Honorable Steve Scalise, House Majority Leader
- The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries, House Democratic Leader
- The Honorable Tom Emmer, House Majority Whip
- The Honorable Katherine Clark, House Democratic Whip
- The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Senate Democratic Leader
- The Honorable John Barrasso, Senate Majority Whip
- The Honorable Dick Durbin, Senate Democratic Whip

House & Senate Appropriations Leadership

- The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations
- The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations
- The Honorable Hal Rogers, Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
- The Honorable Grace Meng, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
- The Honorable Susan Collins, Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
- The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations
- The Honorable Jerry Moran, Chairman, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
- The Honorable Chris Van Hollen, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

Committee Leadership

- Chairman and Ranking Member, House Committee on Homeland Security
- Chairman and Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
- Chairman and Ranking Member, House Committee on the Judiciary
- Chairman and Ranking Member, Senate Committee on the Judiciary

Arizona Congressional Delegation

- The Honorable Mark Kelly, United States Senator
- The Honorable Ruben Gallego, United States Senator
- The Honorable Andy Biggs, Member of Congress
- The Honorable Juan Ciscomani, Member of Congress
- The Honorable Yassamin Ansari, Member of Congress
- The Honorable Paul Gosar, Member of Congress
- The Honorable Eli Crane, Member of Congress
- The Honorable Greg Stanton, Member of Congress
- The Honorable David Schweikert, Member of Congress
- The Honorable Abraham Hamadeh, Member of Congress
- The Honorable Adelita Grijalva, Member of Congress