

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 16, 2017

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Director, Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street Northwest
Washington, District of Columbia 20503

Dear Director Mulvaney:

We are writing to express our concern about reported severe reductions to the Office of the National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) in the fiscal 2018 budget that would put in jeopardy programs that provide needed assistance to state and local law enforcement and community coalitions to fight the growing opioid epidemic.

As you know, ONDCP has played a critical role in coordinating the nation's drug control efforts. Since 1988 this office has enjoyed bipartisan support for its mission of protecting public safety and promoting public health. The office's National Drug Control Strategy has provided an important blueprint to guide and coordinate the efforts of federal, state, and local partners to ensure an evidence-based and accountable strategy to address the devastating impact of drugs on our communities.

The need for a coordinated, effective, and accountable approach to substance abuse and drug trafficking is greater than ever. The National Institute of Drug Abuse reports that the number of overdose deaths from prescription opioids increased by a factor of 2.8 between 2002 and 2015. The number of heroin deaths increased by a factor of 6.2 in the same period. This epidemic is being felt in communities throughout the United States and the effects have been devastating.

The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program, overseen by ONDCP, has been a critical component of the National Drug Control Strategy. This program aids in the coordination of federal, state, and local drug task forces to disrupt or dismantle drug trafficking organizations. It also engages and provides support to state and federal prosecutors to convict individuals associated with drug trafficking organizations. In recent years, HIDTA seizures have yielded billions of dollars that transnational criminal organizations would have used to reinvest in the illegal drug trade. Instead, this cost-effective program has reinvested proceeds in efforts to further address the causes and effects of substance abuse.

The office's Drug Free Communities (DFC) Program has been similarly effective. Its approach to addressing local problems with community-driven solutions has consistently shown reductions in past 30-day use of alcohol, tobacco, and prescription drugs. The program is designed with strict accountability provisions to ensure the highest levels of local support in solving the substance abuse crisis each community faces. By law, there is a cap on the amount of money that can be spent on administrative and overhead expenses, which ensures that the

maximum amount of funding goes to DFC coalitions that have the power to reduce youth substance use in their own communities. Coalitions are required to be in existence and fully functioning for a minimum of six months before they are eligible to apply, and they must have baseline data to show that they have full knowledge of local drug issues, as well as matching federal funding with dollar-for-dollar local funds.

For almost two decades, ONDCP has had a critical role in ensuring the nation's drug policy is effective, accountable, and evidence-based. The Office and the programs it supports are uniquely positioned to address the causes and effects of the current opioid crisis with proven strategies and broad reach. For these important programs to remain effective, we believe they must continue to be funded fully and coordinated effectively. We are gravely concerned that any interruption would exacerbate the crises in our communities and we remain committed in working together to reverse the damaging effects that opioids and other drugs have had on American families.

We respectfully request clarification on the Administration's intended actions to ensure the continuity of HIDTA and DFC and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


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Member of Congress


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Member of Congress


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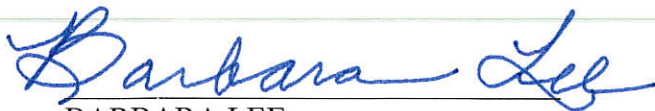

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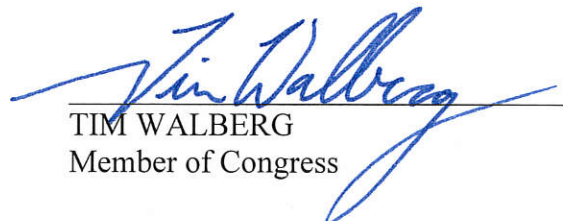

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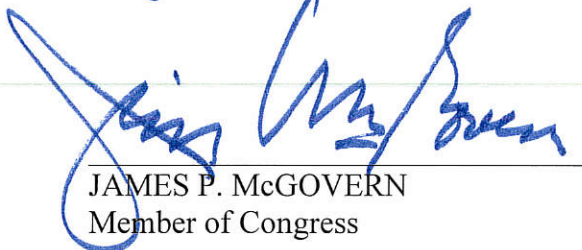
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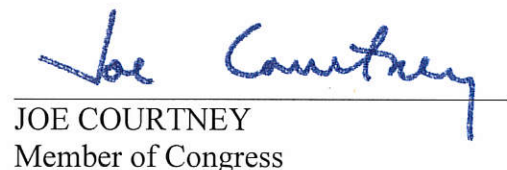
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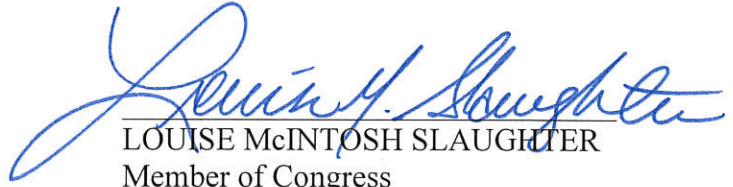
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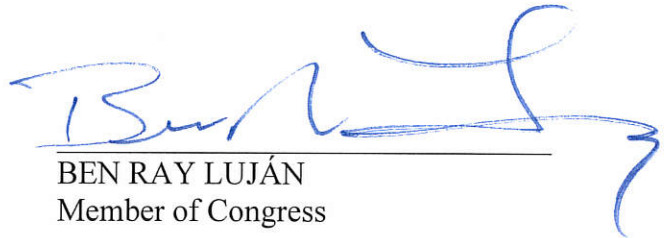
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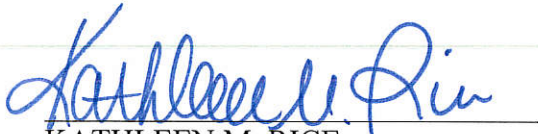
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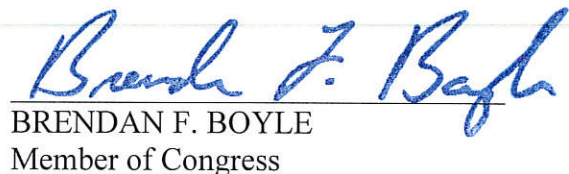
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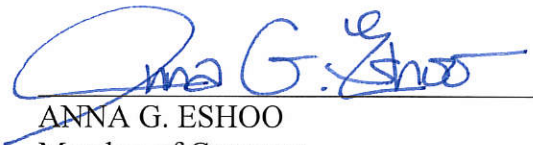
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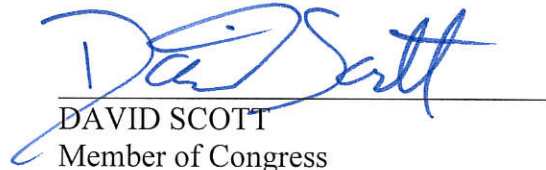
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