

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 9, 2017

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Director
Office of Management and the Budget
Eisenhower Executive Office Building, Room 251
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Mulvaney:

As chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) that has jurisdiction over the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), I am writing to express my serious concern with recent press reports that the Administration intends to recommend a 95 percent cut to the ONDCP in the fiscal year 2018 budget proposal. The cuts would reportedly eliminate funding for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) and Drug Free Communities programs.

Our nation is in the grips of an opioid epidemic that according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is claiming 91 lives per day. The CDC found that in 2015 my state of West Virginia had the highest opioid overdose death rate in the nation. Given the national scale of this drug epidemic, the ONDCP's role in coordinating federal efforts to help combat drug abuse and addiction has never been more important.

Twenty West Virginia counties are part of the HIDTA program that provides important resources to law enforcement. The HIDTA program brings together local police, state officials, and federal agencies to facilitate a regional approach to combatting drug trafficking. In 2016, Monongalia and Jefferson counties in West Virginia were added to the HIDTA program. Additional counties in my state and across the country continue to seek HIDTA designations, demonstrating that there is still unmet need for the program's resources.

The Drug Free Communities program has targeted its prevention efforts to some of the hardest hit regions of West Virginia. Last fall, eight grantees in West Virginia from our Eastern and Northern Panhandles to the southern coalfields received funding to support community specific efforts to combat the drug epidemic.

More resources to aid our local law enforcement and community prevention efforts are necessary. That is why I led bipartisan efforts to secure a funding increase for both the HIDTA and Drug Free Communities programs in the Fiscal Year 2017 Omnibus Appropriations Act that President Trump signed into law last week.

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I urge you to reconsider any plans to propose funding cuts for the ONDCP in the midst of this serious opioid epidemic and instead submit to Congress a budget proposal that will demonstrate the Administration's strong commitment to aiding our state and local governments in combatting drug addiction.

If cuts to the ONDCP, including the HIDTA and Drug Free Communities programs, are proposed in the Administration's Fiscal Year 2018 Budget then I will lead a bipartisan group of my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee and in the Senate to reject those proposed cuts.

Sincerely,



Shelley Moore Capito
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Financial Services and General Government