

US Fed News

July 7, 2010 Wednesday 9:24 AM EST

**SEN. SCHUMER: ADMINISTRATION BUDGET SLASHES FUNDING FOR CRITICAL STATEN ISLAND DRUG ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM**

WASHINGTON, July 6 -- The office of Sen. Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y., issued the following news release:

Joined by law enforcement officials, U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer today revealed that the Administration's Fiscal Year 2011 budget slashes funding for a critical program aimed at curbing drug trafficking, sales, and abuse on Staten Island. Schumer said that Staten Island is part of the **High Intensity Drug Trafficking** Area program that provides the borough with millions of dollars in funding to help attack the drug problem on Staten Island. According to the NYPD, there have been 2,000 arrests on Staten Island for narcotics sale or possession in 2010 alone. The Administration's budget slashes the program by 13 percent which could translate to a loss of nearly \$1.5 million for New York City area operations. Schumer announced he will fight to restore the cuts before the final appropriations bill is approved in the fall.

"Even one teenager using drugs is one too many, but now on Staten Island, the rash of drug use, especially the use of prescription drugs, has touched dozens of neighborhoods in all corners of Staten Island," Schumer said. "Law enforcement officials are working around the clock to crack down on the criminals who sell this terrible drug to our kids. This critical funding provides invaluable resources to New York City law enforcement officials who are on the ground here on Staten Island in the war against drugs. We simply cannot allow the feds to pull back now - it's outrageous, unacceptable and I am going to fight tooth and nail to stop it."

"The NY/NJ **HIDTA** is a federal grant that invests in federal, state and local law enforcement partnerships to reduce the destructive consequences of illegal drugs, particularly drug-related violence," said Chauncey Parker, Director of the New York/New Jersey **HIDTA** program. "The NY/NJ **HIDTA** covers 22 counties in New York State and New Jersey and provides funding to support over 1000 law enforcement officers and crime analysts who participate in several of the finest law enforcement task forces in the country, including the Investigative Support Center, OCDETF Strike Force, El Dorado Money Laundering Task Force and the Regional Fugitive Task Force. The NY/NJ **HIDTA** is extremely grateful to Senator Schumer's for his invaluable and unyielding support for the **HIDTA** program for many years. Among other things, thanks to Senator Schumer, the geographic footprint of the NY/NJ **HIDTA** has almost doubled, expanding from New York City to Buffalo, and most recently, to the Northern Border of New York State. With each expansion, Senator Schumer also helped secure critical funding to support the local county drug enforcement task force as well as funding to hire drug intelligence officers in each of the new **HIDTA** counties, thereby creating a regional network of intelligence points of light that seamlessly share intelligence across the region and beyond."

The **HIDTA** program was established by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 to provide assistance to federal, state and local law enforcement entities operating in areas most adversely affected by drug trafficking. A central

feature of the **HIDTA** program is the discretion granted to **HIDTA** Executive Boards to design a strategy to respond to the specific drug trafficking threats found in each **HIDTA** region and to develop initiatives to implement the strategy. This discretion ensures that each **HIDTA** Executive Board can tailor its strategy and initiatives closely to local conditions and can respond quickly to changes in those conditions.

In the Administrations Fiscal Year 2011 Budget, the Administration proposed cutting **HIDTA** funding by 13 percent from \$239 million down to \$210 million. Schumer said this would translate to an estimated cut of between \$1.3 million to \$2 million cut for the New York **HIDTA** that covers Staten Island. The New York **HIDTA** received \$10 million last year.

In New York City, **HIDTA** provides agencies with equipment and technology, and additional resources to combat drug trafficking. Specifically, **HIDTA** funding has been used to provide funding for the Investigative Support Center (ISC), The Narcotics Intelligence Unit (NIU), the Hidden Trafficker Program, The Regional Gun Center, SAFETNET, New York OCEDEF Strike Force, El Dorado Money Laundering Task Force, and the Regional Fugitive Task Force.

The prescription drug problem on Staten Island has been described as a teen epidemic. Over the course of the past few years, countless arrests and several teen deaths have been linked the prescription drug abuse. According to a study by the Columbia University center, prescription opiod abuse jumped 542 percent among 12 to 17 year olds between 1992 and 2002. Teens also have easy access to pills, according to a 2008 study from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, one in five teens said prescription drugs were easier to purchase than beer. And when teens who know prescription drug abusers were asked where their acquaintances get their drugs, 34 percent said from home, parents or the medicine cabinet, while another 31 percent said from their friends or classmates.

The NY/NJ **HIDTA** region is a national distribution center for illicit drugs, primarily cocaine, heroin, and marijuana. Multikilogram to metric ton quantities of these drugs are transported to the region from drug source and transit countries such as Canada, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico as well as from domestic locations such as Florida, Georgia, Puerto Rico, and the Southwest Border area. Wholesale quantities of illicit drugs that enter the region are typically divided into smaller quantities for further distribution within the region or in drug markets throughout the Northeast, Southeast, and Midwest.

In response to these cuts, today Schumer announced he is joining with a bipartisan group of Senators to fight the cuts. He has made a direct appeal to the Chairman and Ranking members of the Senate budget committee asking them to restore the funding in the final Congressional budget. For more information please contact: Sarabjit Jagirdar, Email:-  
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**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newswire