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SEN. SCHUMER: CONGRESS RESTORES FUNDING TO CRITICAL FEDERAL-LOCAL ANTI-DRUG PARTNERSHIP

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WASHINGTON, July 27 -- The office of Sen. Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y., issued the following news release:

Today, U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer said that Congress has restored funding for the **High Intensity Drug Trafficking Program (HIDTA)** after the administration had proposed a huge cut earlier in the year. **HIDTA** is a critical program aimed at curbing drug trafficking, crime, sales, and abuse in every region in New York State. The proposed cut of 12% came in spite of an increasing amount of drugs being smuggled over the Canadian border. Today the Appropriations Subcommittee for Financial Services and General Government released their budget bill, which restored full funding to the program.

"Fully funding the **HIDTA** program will benefit families and law enforcement across New York," said Schumer. "Upstate is one of the greatest places to raise a family, not just in the country, but on earth. To keep the quality of life so high, we've got to use every resource we have to combat those who would do our families harm, and we need to push back hard against the recent rise in drug smuggling across the Canadian border. It is tremendously important that Congress has restored the cuts that the administration had proposed, and I am truly grateful to my colleagues on the appropriations committee."

Schumer was joined in his battle to restore **HIDTA** funding by district attorneys from across the state. In April, when the fight began, they said:

"**HIDTA** funding is a critical investment in fighting drug trafficking, drug related crimes, and drug use in New York. Reducing resources to combat drug trafficking in New York only puts the safety of our communities at risk," Onondaga County District Attorney Bill Fitzpatrick said. "I join Senator Schumer in urging the Administration to ensure that the **HIDTA** in New York receives the full resources necessary to investigate, analyze, and reduce drug trafficking."

"**HIDTA** funding has led to the dismantling of significant cross border narcotics smuggling operations; these operations also smuggle aliens, weapons and other illicit items which are a direct threat to our homeland security," Franklin County District Attorney Derek Champagne said. "Any decreased funding will directly affect our ability Upstate to secure our border (not only from drug smugglers) but from terrorists."

"**HIDTA** is a program that St. Lawrence County reaps the benefits of time and time again in our fight against drug trafficking," St. Lawrence County District Attorney Nicole Duve? said. "Being on an international border with miles of coastline and two border crossings, presents a unique challenge to our county. If funding is reduced to this vital program, it will jeopardize our ongoing efforts to protect St. Lawrence County families from the crimes associated with drug trafficking."

Drug trafficking has become an increasing problem in Northern New York as international drug smugglers seek every available route to bring their products into the United States. For example, America's northern border is

now the lead gateway for ecstasy to enter the U.S. Since 2005, the number of seizures of ecstasy coming across the northern border has been eight times greater than the number of seizures in our country's southwest border. And during the last five years law enforcement officials across the country's northern border have seized an average of almost 400 kilograms of ecstasy per year.

Since 2007, cocaine seizures at the northern border have risen from less than 1kg to 18kg; heroin seizures have gone from less than 1kg to 28kg; marijuana seizures have gone from 2,791kg to 3,423kg and; ecstasy seizures have gone from 240kg to 303kg.

In the Administration's Fiscal Year 2011 Budget, the Administration proposed cutting **HIDTA** funding by 12 percent from \$239 million down to \$210 million. Schumer said this could translate to an estimated cut of between \$1.2 million to \$1.5 million cut for the New York **HIDTA** that covers 15 counties in New York. The New York **HIDTA** received some \$10 million last year. With these funds the New York **HIDTA** has developed the Investigative Support Center (ISC), one of the largest, most comprehensive criminal intelligence centers in the country, consisting of over 600 officers and crime analysts. Law enforcement agencies throughout the region are able to share information through various components of the ISC. The New York **HIDTA** has also developed the Narcotics Intelligence Unit to provide strategic analysis and case support for drug-related investigations, as well as several pointed task forces to disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking networks. The areas covered by **HIDTA** are New York City and Albany, Clinton, Erie, Franklin, Monroe, Nassau, Onondaga, St. Lawrence, Suffolk, and Westchester Counties

The mission of the **HIDTA** program is to disrupt the market for illegal drugs in the United States by assisting federal, state, and local law enforcement entities to dismantle and disrupt drug trafficking organizations - with an emphasis on drug trafficking regions that have harmful effects on other parts of the United States. Since 1990, 28 regions in the United States, comprising 14 percent of U.S. counties, have been designated as **HIDTAs** and are eligible to receive targeted funding through the program. A **HIDTA** is regarded as a coordinating umbrella for federal, state and local agencies. The goal of the **HIDTA** program is to enhance integration and invest in partnerships between federal, state, and local agencies, while eliminating unnecessary overlap and duplication of efforts. Once the White House's Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), the office that runs the **HIDTA** program, designates a region as a **HIDTA**, it can receive federal money to help local law enforcement clamp down on illegal drugs transported through those counties. The particular **HIDTA's** Executive Board then allocates funding in order to fight drug trafficking in the region most effectively.

The New York/New Jersey **HIDTA** program, with its main offices in Manhattan, currently encompasses 17 counties located throughout New York and northeastern New Jersey. The New York portion of the region consists of the five boroughs of New York City (Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island), the two outer counties of Long Island (Nassau and Suffolk), Westchester County, and four upstate counties that were added in 2007: Albany, Erie, Monroe, and Onondaga. The New Jersey portion consists of Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Passaic, and Union Counties. The New York/New Jersey **HIDTA** is led by an Executive Board consisting of 24 federal, state, and local law enforcement leaders, and has partnerships with over 100 federal, state, local, and non-government agencies within the New York metropolitan area and beyond.

For years, Schumer has been a strong supporter of the **HIDTA** program and has successfully worked to add Upstate New York counties to the program. Since

2007, Schumer has successfully urged the expansion of the **HIDTA** program to include Onondaga, Albany, Erie and Monroe Clinton, Franklin and St. Lawrence Counties. Just recently, Schumer pressed the Administration to include Jefferson County in the program so that the local government could begin to combat increased drug trafficking.

In 2009 here are how drug arrests broke down across the state:

* In the Capital Region, there were 3,100 drug-related arrests of adults in 2009.

* In Western New York, there were 6,100 drug-related arrests of adults in 2009.

* In the Rochester-Finger Lakes Region, there were 2,800 drug-related arrests of adults in 2009.

* In the Southern Tier, there were 1,400 drug-related arrests of adults in 2009.

In Central New York, there were 2,400 drug-related arrests of adults in 2009.

* In the Hudson Valley, there were 7,100 drug-related arrests of adults in 2009.

* In the North Country, there were 1,100 drug-related arrests of adults in 2009.

Schumer added, "Right now New York's communities are outgunned in the fight against drugs and that just can't continue. I'm hopeful that this effort will get the ball rolling on a new approach and ensure that our counties have the resources they need to combat this problem." For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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