



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 2005

Honorable Jerry Lewis
Chairman

Honorable David R. Obey
Ranking Member

Committee on Appropriations
H218 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515-6015

Dear Chairman Lewis and Ranking Member Obey:

We are writing to ask you to support the President's FY 2006 request for the overall National Drug Control Budget of \$12.4 billion, an increase of approximately \$300 million over the FY 2005 enacted amount of \$12.1 billion. We are also writing, however, to seek your support for a number of individual programs that, taken together, are a major part of the foundation of our nation's anti-crime and anti-narcotics efforts.

While budget cuts are inevitable in the current period of fiscal restraints, we have concerns about a potential loss of focus or commitment in the area of drug control. Drug abuse is directly responsible for the deaths of over 20,000 Americans each year, and imposes massive social costs. Congress and the Administration cannot afford to neglect this critical problem.

The President's Drug Budget Strategy

While we support the President's overall request, we have deep concerns about the strategy underlying some of the Administration's specific drug budget proposals. The sweeping changes proposed by the Administration appear to reflect two basic strategic choices: first, a de-emphasis on drug use prevention; and second, a de-emphasis on assistance to state and local agencies.

The first choice, to downgrade federal drug use prevention efforts, is reflected in the Administration's requests for the federal government's three major drug use prevention programs, namely the Safe and Drug-Free Schools state grant program at the Department of Education, and the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign and the Drug-Free Communities program at the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). Of these three programs, the largest (the Schools program) is being targeted for complete elimination, while the remaining two would be

level-funded (which, when inflation is taken into account, amounts to a decrease in total resources for the programs). As a result, prevention now accounts for only 13 percent of the Administration's proposed drug control budget.

We share the Administration's concerns about measuring the effectiveness of our prevention programs in reducing drug use. However, the appropriate response is to reform the existing programs by making them more accountable, or to propose new and better programs. The Administration's deep cuts, unaccompanied by any new proposals, suggest a significant abandonment of even the concept of prevention. That would be a serious mistake. Unless the nation is able to reduce drug use demand, there will always be a market for illegal drugs.

The second Administration choice – to scale back federal support for state and local anti-drug efforts – is equally troubling. The President is proposing the total elimination of the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants (the "Byrne Grants") to the states for law enforcement support, the reduction (by more than half) of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program and the transfer of its remaining funds to the control of the federal Justice Department, a sharp reduction in the Counterdrug Technology Assessment Center's (CTAC) Technology Transfer Program, and (as noted above) the elimination of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools state grant program. The message sent by these proposals is that federal funds previously used to support state and local drug enforcement or prevention efforts will now be spent exclusively on federally-controlled programs.

We do not agree that all federal assistance to state and local agencies lacks national impact or importance. State and local law enforcement personnel are fighting on the "front lines" in the struggle to stop drug trafficking. They make over 90 percent of drug-related arrests and seizures. Local schools are the best venue through which we can educate young people on the dangers of drug abuse. State and local prisons house most of the nation's drug offenders. Federal assistance to these agencies can have a major positive impact, by involving them in the national goals of enforcement, treatment, and prevention.

Our specific findings with respect to individual programs and agencies are set forth below.

Office of National Drug Control Policy ("ONDCP")

We have concerns about the Administration's request for \$24,224,000 for operations at ONDCP. That would be a \$2 million cut from the appropriated level of \$26.2 million for fiscal year 2005, and a \$3.4 million reduction from the Administration's own request for \$27.6 million last year.

We are, of course, aware that in a time of shrinking budgets, many agencies must share the burden of budget cuts. The Director of ONDCP, John Walters, has testified before the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources that this \$2 million cut would not result in the loss of any ONDCP employee positions, but is the result of savings in rent and other overhead costs. We have not received any specific information on these savings, however.

We urge your Committee to ensure that any funding reductions do not, in fact, result in downsizing ONDCP. ONDCP is the President's principal advisor with respect to drug control policy development and program oversight, and shoulders the responsibility to guide the nation's efforts to both reduce the use, manufacturing, and trafficking of illicit drugs, and to reduce the

associated crime, violence, and health consequences of illegal drug use. Further reductions in its budget would hinder ONDCP's ability to provide effective policy coordination and oversight of the federal government's efforts to reduce drug abuse – a result that we hope you will join us in opposing.

National Drug Control Program Performance Measures

We support the Administration's request for \$2,000,000 for the further development of performance measures for federal drug control programs, identical to last year's budget request, and double the \$1,000,000 actually appropriated for fiscal year 2005. ONDCP is tasked by statute with developing comprehensive performance measures that will allow Congress and the public to weigh the impact of each drug control program, and to improve performance. We hope that ONDCP will continue to make solid progress in developing and implementing these performance measures.

1. Drug Treatment Programs

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Drug Treatment Programs

We support the President's Access To Recovery (ATR) initiative, which seeks to increase and enhance the availability of drug treatment in the United States, as well as the focus of the initiative on using the results of treatment programs as a primary performance measure. We therefore applaud the Administration's request for a 50 percent increase in the ATR program, for a total of \$150 million. This initiative, administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), will provide people seeking clinical treatment and/or recovery support services with vouchers to pay for the care they need. It also will allow assessment of need and will provide vouchers for clients who require clinical treatment and/or recovery support services but would not otherwise be able to access care.

Research at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

We support the proposed \$4 million increase in the budget of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), which will ensure NIDA's continuing commitment to key research efforts, including basic research on the nature of addiction, development of science-based behavioral interventions, medications development, and the rapid translation of research findings into practice.

Drug Court Program

We support the Administration's request for \$70,060,000 for the drugs courts program, identical to last year's request for \$70,060,000, and a significant increase over the \$40,000,000 actually appropriated by Congress for 2005. The drug courts program is praised by law enforcement officers, judges, and addiction specialists throughout the country, and shows a great deal of promise.

However, we also believe that the drug courts program should monitor not simply the re-arrest rate of program participants, but their drug use as well. A vigorous, mandatory system of drug testing should be applied in every drug court case, to ensure that program participants are staying off of drugs.

National Drug Court Institute

We support the Administration's request for \$1,000,000 for the National Drug Court Institute, which matches last year's request and would be an increase from the appropriated level of \$750,000 for fiscal year 2005. With the increasing reliance on drug court programs around the country, it is more important than ever that ONDCP review these programs and determine their rate of success. Better guidance could help improve and promote these programs nationwide.

Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) Program

We support the Administration's request for \$44,119,000 for the RSAT program. However, even though this is an increase over the \$25,000,000 actually appropriated by Congress for fiscal year 2005, it is sharply lower than the \$76,054,000 the Administration requested last year. It is regrettable that Congress has not provided more funds for the program, which is intended to support drug treatment for prisoners in state and local prison systems. Most of our nation's drug offenders are incarcerated in state or local prisons. Moreover, most of these prisoners are the kind of low-level offenders who would benefit most from drug treatment.

Bureau of Prisons

We support the Administration's request for \$49,700,000 for the Bureau of Prisons' drug treatment programs. This would be an increase of \$1.1 million over the fiscal year 2005 enacted level, and a \$400,000 increase over the Administration's request for last year. We believe that the Bureau's efforts to reduce drug use and addiction by prisoners are commendable, and have had very positive results.

We also support the Administration's overall request for \$253,000,000 for "inmate programs." This is a new line item in the Administration's budget request, which more clearly separates the costs of actually confining prisoners from the costs of assisting prisoners to reintegrate into society after release. In addition to drug treatment, these reintegration programs include education and vocational training, and support for faith-based programs such as the Life Connections Program.

Prisoner Re-entry Initiative

We support the Administration's request for \$15,000,000 for a prisoner re-entry initiative, designed to assist faith- and community-based organizations in drug treatment and other services to prisoners preparing to reintegrate into society after incarceration. The Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources held a hearing on this issue on February 3, 2005, and received information about the significant accomplishments of faith- and community-based organizations in the field of prisoner re-entry services. We believe that this proposal would be further strengthened by authorizing legislation from the Congress. Legislation of that kind, such as the "Second Chance Act" sponsored by Reps. Rob Portman and Danny Davis, would better define the program's goals and methods of implementation.

2. Drug Abuse Prevention

National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign

The Media Campaign is an integrated effort that combines paid and donated advertising with public communications outreach. The program is clearly having a positive impact, as marijuana and other drug use by young people has fallen significantly since 2001. ONDCP's decision to focus on marijuana use has paid dividends, and we are hopeful that even more progress will be made in the future.

We have concerns about the Administration's request for only \$120,000,000 for the Media Campaign, a significant decrease from the \$145,000,000 requested for fiscal year 2005. Although this current request matches the amount actually appropriated by Congress last year, that in itself was a decrease from the \$135 million appropriated in fiscal year 2004. A truly national advertising program requires sufficient funding to be effective – the purchased advertisements must be of high quality and must reach their intended audience. We believe that these reductions may jeopardize the program's effectiveness.

Drug-Free Communities Program

We support the Administration's request for \$80,000,000 for the Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Program, which assists local community anti-drug coalitions to prevent substance abuse among young people. This is the same level of funding requested by the Administration and appropriated by Congress in fiscal year 2005. We are concerned, however, that if the program's budget does not expand, many new coalitions may not be able to start their work – particularly in the poorest communities where the need for drug use prevention is greatest.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program

The President's budget requests \$318 million for the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program, a 53% cut from fiscal year 2005. The largest of the Safe and Drug-Free programs, the State Grants program, is completely eliminated in the budget proposal, after receiving \$441 million in for fiscal year 2005.

We are disappointed with this large cut to the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program, and urge your Committee to restore the State Grants fund. While over half of the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in the country receive less than \$10,000 from this funding source, most of these districts have leveraged those dollars for additional community resources. These funds have contributed in part to the 17% drop in youth drug use over the past three years.

We agree that this program is in need of reform, to ensure that it remains focused on drug use prevention. However, instead of eliminating the State Grants program, we believe that the Administration should take steps to reform it, most notably by insisting on sufficient reporting data to allow performance review. By ensuring that the program funds drug use prevention programs that are focused and effective, the Administration can preserve one of our most important tools in the national drug strategy.

Student Drug Testing

The President's budget request also includes \$25.4 million for school-based drug testing programs for students. We support this testing initiative. By addressing accountability, drug testing in schools has proven the single most effective drug-prevention program in the United States.

U.S. Anti-Doping Agency and Membership Dues to World Anti-Doping Agency

We support the Administration's request for \$7,400,000 for the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, as well as the Administration's request for \$2,900,000 for our nation's membership dues in the World Anti-Doping Agency. Through the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency and its international counterpart, the United States seeks to stop the use of illegal performance-enhancing drugs by American and international athletes in Olympic sports, through education, drug testing programs, and similar initiatives.

3. Law Enforcement Programs

High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Program

We oppose the Administration's proposal to cut funds for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program at ONDCP by 56 percent (from fiscal year 2005's enacted level of \$228,350,000 to \$100,000,000), and to move the reduced program to the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) program at the Department of Justice.

If enacted, this proposal would effectively terminate the current HIDTA program. First, the budget cut alone – 56 percent of last year's enacted level – would shut down most of the task forces, intelligence centers, and “deconfliction” activities funded by the program. Either most of the 28 individual HIDTAs would have to be eliminated, or all of them would have to accept very deep cuts (notably, at their current funding levels the original five HIDTAs – the Southwest Border, Los Angeles, Houston, New York/New Jersey, and South Florida – would take up nearly all of the \$100 million proposed by the Administration).

Second, the move of HIDTA into OCDETF, besides contradicting existing law, would probably undermine the program. OCDETF is a very different program, primarily designed to bring existing state and local cases into federal court by providing funding through the U.S. Attorneys. HIDTA, by contrast, seeks to bring together federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in cooperative operations, intelligence sharing, and investigations. Each HIDTA has an executive board made up of equal representatives of federal agencies on the one hand, and state and local agencies on the other. The boards then decide how to allocate their HIDTAs' budgets among various task forces and other operations.

This equal voice for state and local agencies has generated an unprecedented level of cooperation on the part of all participants. Moreover, it has led state and local agencies to make very significant contributions of their own agents, employees, office space, and equipment to HIDTA task forces – most of which are not reimbursed with federal dollars and which dwarf, in their dollar value, the federal budget components of the individual HIDTAs. We risk losing those contributions if the federal government ends the balanced control of HIDTA operations.

Drug Enforcement Administration

We support the Administration's proposal for \$1,892,700,000 for the Drug Enforcement Administration, an increase of over \$100 million from the \$1,785,000,000 received by DEA for fiscal year 2005, and approximately \$76 million more than the Administration's proposal of last year.

Interagency Crime and Drug Enforcement - Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF)

We generally support the President's budget proposal of \$661,940,000 for "Interagency and Crime Drug Enforcement", the account under which the Administration places its request for funds for the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF). That is an increase of over \$100 million from the FY 2005 enacted funding of \$553.539 million, and over \$80 million from the Administration's request of last year (\$580 million). That increase, however, is almost entirely due to the proposed transfer of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program from the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to OCDETF – a move that we oppose (as described above).

We do support the Administration's proposal to spend \$14.693 million for a new OCDETF Drug Fusion Center. We are concerned, however, that the Fusion Center not become a one-way street, in which participating agencies provide information, but receive nothing in return. We urge your Committee to take steps to ensure that these funds are expended in a way that increases cooperation and intelligence sharing, and does not drive agencies apart.

We also support the Administration's proposal to use \$58 million to fund additional narcotics agents at the FBI, as well as prosecutors. We urge your Committee, however, to direct OCDETF to monitor these new employees to make sure that their efforts remain focused on drug enforcement. OCDETF should not become a funding source for other agencies to conduct non-drug related activities.

We also believe that OCDETF should support the efforts of Operation Panama Express South, an interagency intelligence-driven program jointly managed by the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security, targeting drug trafficking from Colombia's Pacific and Caribbean coasts. We are concerned that this successful intelligence driven program continues to operate with insufficient funding from the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Defense; this program should be fully supported and enhanced. Therefore, we recommend that adequate funding for Panama Express South be clearly identified with a separate line item in OCDETF's final appropriation.

Methamphetamine-Related Assistance ("Meth Hot Spots" Grants)

We oppose the proposed reduction in funds (administered by the Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) office) dedicated to law enforcement activities against methamphetamine trafficking (the "Meth Hot Spots" grants). Methamphetamine abuse has ravaged communities across the United States, and put severe strains on state and local enforcement agencies forced to find clandestine drug labs, clean up the environmental damage they create, and arrest the drug trafficking rings that operate them. To assist these overburdened agencies, Congress approved \$54,050,000 in fiscal year 2004 and \$52,556,000 in fiscal year 2005 for policing initiatives to combat methamphetamine production and trafficking and to enhance policing initiatives in "drug hot spots."

The current proposal requests only \$20,000,000 for fiscal year 2006, a cut of more than 60 percent from appropriated funds for 2005. This would greatly reduce the ability of State and local law enforcement agencies to help their Federal partners in reducing methamphetamine abuse, particularly given the proposed overall reduction in State and local law enforcement assistance grants.

It should be noted, however, that Congress itself needs to take steps to ensure that federal assistance is targeted to the most affected areas of the country. Excessive “earmarking” of these funds undermines their efficiency. Although many states and communities suffer from methamphetamine trafficking and abuse, federal dollars are limited and must be directed to the areas where they will make the most difference from a national point of view. We urge your Committee and the Administration to work together in finding ways to address this issue.

Prescription Drug Monitoring Program

We also have concerns about the proposed reduction in funding for a prescription drug monitoring program. In fiscal year 2005, Congress approved \$10,000,000 for this program, despite the Administration’s refusal to request any funds for it. This year, the Administration has agreed to request some funds for the program, but only \$5,000,000 – half of fiscal year 2005’s appropriated level.

Prescription drug abuse is a serious and growing problem throughout the United States, as illustrated by the recent wave of OxyContin and other oxycodone-related overdoses. One major difficulty facing Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies in dealing with this threat is the lack of sufficient information about how these drugs are being diverted from their proper medical uses to illegal trafficking and abuse. The federal government needs to continue work on the establishment of a monitoring system that would track supplies of prescription drugs and give law enforcement officials more information about illegal diversion.

Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant

We oppose the Administration’s proposal to terminate the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (“Byrne Grants”) program. Congress already complied with the Administration’s request to consolidate previously separate grant programs into the single Byrne Grants program (Congress appropriated \$634,000,000 for these grants for fiscal year 2005). The Administration now proposes to restrict federal assistance for state and local law enforcement programs to a series of enumerated grants (most of which are previously existing programs) under a “Justice Assistance” account. In practice, this will sharply limit the amount of money available to help state and local agencies.

The Administration’s drastic proposed cuts would create massive shortfalls in the budgets of state and local law enforcement agencies across the country. Numerous state and local officials have informed us that many programs – particularly drug enforcement task forces – within states would have to be shut down if Byrne Grant funding were cut off. A spokesman for the Illinois narcotics officers association, for example, testified before the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Trafficking and Human Resources last week that terminating the Byrne Grants would terminate virtually all of the anti-meth and other drug enforcement task forces in his state. We believe that is unacceptable, and urge you to restore funding to this vital program.

Regional Information Sharing System (RISS)

We support the Administration’s request for \$49,049,000 for the Regional Information Sharing System (RISS), an increase from \$45,000,000 appropriated for fiscal year 2005. We believe that RISS, which facilitates electronic, computerized sharing of intelligence and information among federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, is an important tool in the fight against drug trafficking and other organized crime.

Weed and Seed Program

We support the Administration's request for \$59,599,000 for the Weed and Seed Program, an increase from last year's request for \$58,265,000, but less than the \$62,000,000 appropriated by Congress for fiscal year 2005. The Weed and Seed Program is an important initiative designed to help state and local law enforcement agencies work with members of the local community to investigate and prosecute violent criminals and drug offenders, helping to clean up our nation's streets.

Counterdrug Technology Assessment Center (CTAC)

We have concerns about the Administration's request for only \$30,000,000 for the CTAC program, a sharp decrease from the \$42,000,000 appropriated by Congress last year. The CTAC program funds research into drug abuse and addiction, and through the Technology Transfer Program supplies new counterdrug technologies to state and local law enforcement. The proposed decreases would cut the research program nearly in half – from \$18 million to \$10 million – while reducing the Technology Transfer Program by \$4 million, from \$24 million to \$20 million.

The program is certainly in need of greater direction and oversight; ONDCP has not taken sufficient steps to ensure that the Technology Transfer Program supports national goals in reducing overall drug trafficking and improving interagency communication and cooperation. These deep cuts, however, will cripple, not reform CTAC. We urge your Committee to restore the program to last year's funding level.

National Alliance for Model State Drug Laws

We oppose the Administration's proposal to eliminate all funding for the National Alliance for Model State Drug Laws, which was funded at \$1,000,000 (through ONDCP) in fiscal year 2005. The Alliance serves an important function by reviewing the drug laws in the various states, and proposing model state laws in response to new drug threats or challenges. For example, the Alliance recently held a major conference on methamphetamine enforcement, bringing together drug enforcement officials from numerous states to discuss new solutions to the serious problem of meth abuse and trafficking. Most drug enforcement, treatment, and prevention is provided at the state and local level. The federal government has a strong interest in effective state drug policies, and the Alliance helps to promote such policies.

Counterdrug Intelligence Executive Secretariat (CDX)

We have concerns about the Administration's proposal to eliminate all funding for the Counterdrug Intelligence Executive Secretariat (CDX) at ONDCP. This program, which was appropriated \$2,000,000 for fiscal year 2005, has certainly suffered from a lack of direction. It was intended to help ONDCP coordinate the drug intelligence policies and activities of multiple federal law enforcement agencies, most notably through the creation of a General Counterdrug Intelligence Plan (GCIP). The need for that coordination is as great today as it ever was, meaning that the mission of CDX is far from fulfilled. Before CDX is eliminated, we believe that the Administration should set forth its specific plans for improving drug intelligence sharing – preferably through a new GCIP (which is in great need of updating in the post-9/11 era).

4. Drug Interdiction Programs

Department of Homeland Security – Drug Interdiction and Enforcement at the U.S. Coast Guard, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

The President's FY 2006 budget request includes \$41.1 billion for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This is an increase in total budgetary authority of 7 percent over the enacted FY 2005 funding. Of that amount, the Administration has identified \$2,936,900,000 as drug control-related. That would be an increase of more than \$300 million over the estimated \$2,631,500,000 appropriated for counterdrug purposes by Congress for fiscal year 2005, and approximately \$400 million over the Administration's request last year. The counterdrug funding would be allocated to 3 agencies: the U.S. Coast Guard, the bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

While we support the proposed increase, we are concerned about the Department's commitment to vigorous drug enforcement. Strong action against drug trafficking is a vital component of our overall effort to stop the financing of terrorist activities. Nowhere is that responsibility more important than at DHS. It was for this reason that Congress specifically provided in 2002 that the primary mission of the Department included the responsibility to "monitor connections between illegal drug trafficking and terrorism, coordinate efforts to sever such connections, and otherwise contribute to efforts to interdict illegal drug trafficking" (6 U.S.C. 111(b) (1) (G)). We urge your Committee to take steps to ensure that the Department, as a condition of receiving its additional funding, take this mandate seriously. This is especially important, as the \$300 increase in the President's overall drug budget request is largely due to the increase in DHS' proposed operational budget.

Department of Homeland Security - Office of Counter-Narcotics Enforcement (CNE)

We were disappointed by the failure of the Administration to request any specific funds for the Office of Counternarcotics Enforcement (CNE) at the Department of Homeland Security. We believe that Congress should designate specific funds for this Office, to allow it to hire personnel and carry out the responsibilities assigned to it by law (see 6 U.S.C. 458).

When Congress created DHS in 2002, it combined some of the most important anti-drug trafficking agencies in the federal government. To assist DHS in meeting its vital counterdrug responsibilities, Congress originally created the Counternarcotics Officer (CNO) position. In an effort further to enhance DHS' counterdrug efforts, Congress passed legislation in 2004 that replaced the CNO with a new Office of Counternarcotics Enforcement, headed by a Director nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. Moreover, the legislation authorized up to \$6 million of the Department's management funds for a dedicated budget for the new Office. (See P.L. 108-458.)

Despite this clear statement of Congressional intent, which was signed by the President, the Administration has not included any funds for the new Office in its budget request. In fact, the budget appears not to mention the Office or its Director at all. This raises the question of whether the Administration intends to nominate a Director or hire staff to assist him, and if so, whether that Director will have any independence or authority to carry out his statutory responsibilities.

We strongly disapprove of this decision, and believe that Congress should specifically designate a line item in any DHS appropriations legislation for the Office. The Department must take this Office, and the mission it was designed to promote, seriously.

4. Department of Defense Counterdrug Programs

The President's federal drug control budget proposal includes \$896 million for the Department of Defense (DoD). However, we note that this may not truly reflect the actual amount of money spent by DoD on drug control. In particular, we are concerned that, due to the Department's wide discretion over funds in the Central Transfer Account (one of DoD's principal sources of counterdrug funding), it is very easy for such funds to be diverted from their intended purposes. We urge your Committee to take steps to ensure that funds appropriated by Congress for counterdrug purposes are used for those purposes.

Airbridge Denial

We support the requested \$21 million for the Airbridge Denial Program, which assists Colombian government in intercepting suspected drug trafficking aircraft. The deterrent effect of this program has significantly reduced loads of drugs being flown from Venezuela and Brazil into Peru. Mr. Uribe, Colombia's Minister of Defense, has briefed Congress on the valuable deterrent effect these flights have had on drug trafficking in his country.

5. International Narcotics Control Programs

Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACI)

We support the Administration's request for \$735 million for the ACI (an increase from \$731 million appropriated for FY 2005). These funds are needed to continue programs in law enforcement, border control, crop reduction, alternative economic development, democratic institution building, and administration of justice and human rights programs in the region. The ACI budget provides support to Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, Venezuela and Panama.

We are concerned, however, that the Administration requested only \$463 million for Colombia under the ACI, which is no larger than the previous year. More resources may be required to support Colombia's unified campaign against drug trafficking and narco-terrorists. Increased funding will lead to higher efforts made by the Colombian Army's aviation program and drug units, as well as the Colombian National Police in the areas of aviation, eradication and interdiction.

International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL)

We support the Administration's request for \$437 million for State Department's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) programs in Afghanistan. While this funding will be used to accelerate the development of police programs and to reduce opium poppy cultivation by providing a drug control capacity, we urge your Committee to take steps to ensure these and other counterdrug funds intended for Afghanistan are used in an effective manner that decreases the heroin supply while increasing cooperation among the State Department, DEA, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department of Defense.

Andean Counterdrug Initiative and Alternative Development

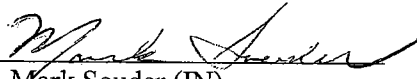
As part of its request for the ACI, the Administration is requesting \$264,600,000 for alternative development and institution building programs, to be administered by USAID. Of this amount, \$125,700,000 would be allocated specifically for assistance in Colombia. This is virtually identical to the \$264.6 million actually appropriated for fiscal year 2005, of which \$125.7 million is intended for programs in Colombia. We support the Administration's request, but we have concerns about the reluctance to provide more assistance. Our efforts in Colombia are finally bearing fruit; now is the time capitalize on those gains. Moreover, it appears that the cocaine and heroin production may be moving out of Colombia and into neighboring countries. If so, the U.S. will have to increase its efforts in those nations.

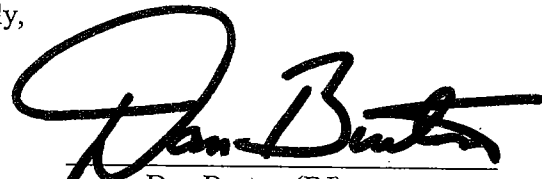
Afghanistan


While the USAID alternative development programs in Colombia can be called a qualified success, we do not believe the same can be said of USAID's efforts in Afghanistan. USAID's Alternative Livelihoods Program (AL), an effort to eradicate opium poppy production in Afghanistan, was initially funded at \$10 million as a pilot program, but was expected to rise to a total of \$130 million by the end of January 2005. Under the watch of USAID and other U.S. agencies, Afghan opium poppy production dramatically increased. While we agree that the intent of the AL program is praiseworthy, we urge your Committee to ensure that its funds are expended in an effective manner that actually reduces opium cultivation and heroin production.

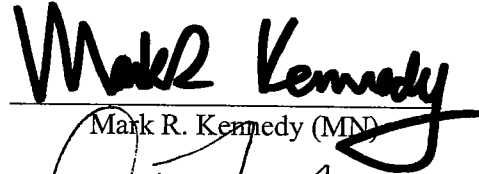
Thank you for your attention to these important issues. We hope that you will join us in supporting these vital programs.

Sincerely,

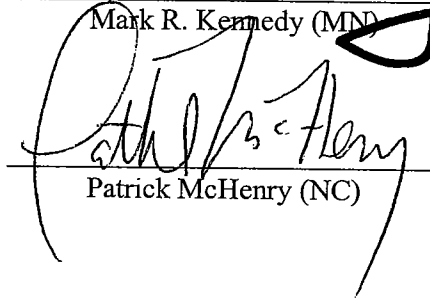

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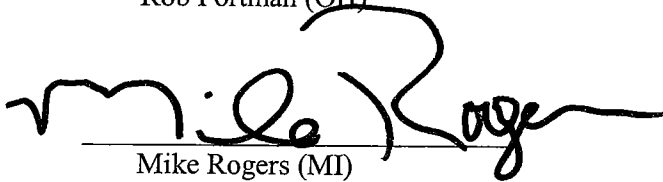

Dan Burton (IN)


John Mica (FL)


Mark R. Kennedy (MD)


Rob Portman (OH)


Patrick McHenry (NC)


Mike Rogers (MI)

