



CITY OF LAVERNE CITY HALL

3660 "D" Street, La Verne, California 91750-3599
www.cityoflaverne.org

June 9, 2025

The Honorable Financial Services & General Government Committee Members
2000 Rayburn House Office Building
45 Independence Ave S.W.
Washington D.C. 20515

RE: Urgent Concerns Regarding FY2026 Budget Changes to HIDTA and ONDCP Oversight

On behalf of the City of La Verne, 31st District in California, I am writing to express my deep concern about the President's FY 2026 Budget proposal, specifically the proposal to move the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to the Department of Justice and to cut the program funding by 35%. I respectfully submit that this proposal will have the unintended consequence of weakening the President's vision to build a coordinated national public safety strategy.

HIDTA provides funding to build a unique platform for federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agency partnerships in 33 regions across the country. The track record of HIDTA speaks for itself; with more than 23,000 federal, state, and local enforcement agents, HIDTA has successfully dismantled 3,209 drug trafficking organizations and in 2024 alone had a return on investment of \$68 per dollar invested.

Each HIDTA is led by an Executive Board that includes the key federal, state, and local law enforcement leaders in the region. This structure is important because it provides state and local leaders with a seat at the table to help design and implement the most effective public safety strategies in their communities.

HIDTA invests in several key public safety partnerships, including disrupting and dismantling the drug trafficking and money laundering organizations and violent gangs; creating an intelligence sharing network for the timely and accurate sharing of information, in particular drug trafficking and gun violence intelligence, among law enforcement agencies across the country; apprehending America's most wanted fugitives across the world; providing tactical training for officers to help keep them safe; as well as building public health partnerships to reduce drug overdoses and save lives.

The HIDTA program, as it is currently structured and funded, will also be in a critical position to support the President's new Homeland Security Task Forces (HSTF). These regional task forces, co-lead by local leaders from Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), will provide an unprecedented opportunity to create a comprehensive and coordinated national public safety strategy, similar to the counterterrorism model created by the Joint Terrorism Task Forces.

HIDTA can, and will, play a vital role in helping to achieve the President's public safety vision for America. Each regional HSTF will have a steering committee, or board, responsible for designing and implementing their public safety strategy. HSI and FBI regional executives will co-lead their HSTF.

In many, if not all, of the regions, they have asked their regional HIDTA Director to serve as part of their regional leadership team. HIDTA is the perfect partner to serve in that role, in particular serving as a bridge to state, local, and tribal law enforcement partners in each of the HSTF regions, as well as providing a platform for regional crime fighting strategies.

For the reasons described herein, and more, I strongly recommend that the HIDTA program structure and funding stay as it is in order to fully achieve the President's public safety vision for our country and ensure local agencies retain the tools, partnerships, and autonomy required to safeguard our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Hepburn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tim Hepburn
Mayor

CC: La Verne City Council
City Manager, Ken Domer
Chief of Police, Sam Gonzalez
Honorable Gil Cisneros