

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2016

The Honorable Ander Crenshaw
Chairman
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
House Committee on Appropriations
B-300 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable José E. Serrano
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
House Committee on Appropriations
2227 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Crenshaw and Ranking Member Serrano:

We write to respectfully request that the Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee consider increasing resources for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Program due to the rise in drug abuse, addiction, and incidents of overdose. The United States is currently experiencing a deluge of prescription opioids and heroin which is destroying individuals, families, and communities. The HIDTA Program has been a critical asset to state and local law enforcement officers as they combat drug trafficking in our nation's communities.

The HIDTA Program—a key component of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)—coordinates federal, state, and local drug task forces to disrupt or dismantle drug trafficking organizations. It also engages and provides support to state and federal prosecutors to convict the individuals associated with these drug trafficking organizations.

Last summer, we were pleased to learn that ONDCP committed \$2.5 million in HIDTA funds to develop a broader strategy to respond to the nation's growing heroin epidemic. Further, we applaud the effort to combine prevention, education, intelligence, and enforcement resources in our worst-hit states and the District of Columbia. But we believe that we must not relent in these efforts. So many individuals—and by extension, their family and friends—are suffering the effects of drug-abuse.

The statistics to justify this request speak volumes. According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse, the number of overdose deaths from prescription opioids has risen 3.4-fold from 2001 to 2014. The number of heroin overdose deaths has risen 6-fold in the same time period, with a notable spike beginning in 2010. The 2015 National Drug Threat Assessment Summary

shows that drug-induced deaths have surpassed motor-vehicle deaths every year between 2008 and 2013, the most recent year for which this information is available.

HIDTA operations also have an impressive history in terms of seizing illegal proceeds. In recent years, these seizures have yielded billions of dollars that transnational criminal organizations would have used to reinvest in the illegal drug trade. Instead, the money was reinvested in efforts to undermine this scourge. Considering these statistics, it is evident HIDTA is a program that pays for itself and is worth the investment.

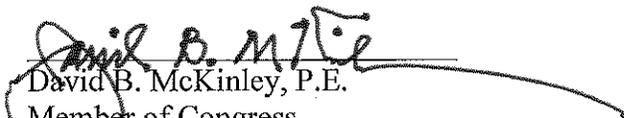
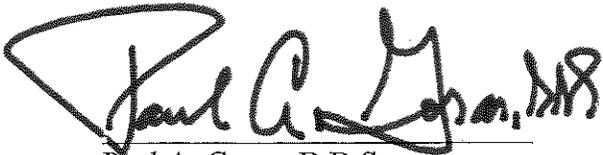
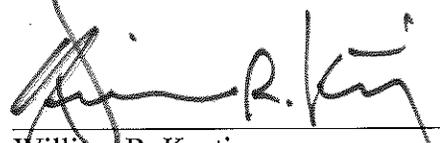
Our local, state, and federal law enforcement officers have done an exceptional job. Their efforts and operations are rising to meet the increasing threats heroin and opioids are posing to our communities. But we, as members of Congress, must do our part to ensure they are able to continue this life-saving work and evolve to meet the dynamic challenges presented by transnational criminal organizations as well as street-level dealers. In light of the HIDTA Program's effectiveness on the ground, the counties that continue to be added to the program annually, and the fact that more than 60 percent of the country's population lives in a HIDTA area, we feel that the need is stronger than ever to support this vital law enforcement program.

We recognize the challenges of the current fiscal environment and thank you for your effort and dutiful consideration of FY 2017 appropriations priorities. Your leadership on the Appropriations Committee is most appreciated.

Sincerely,



Barbara Comstock
Member of Congress

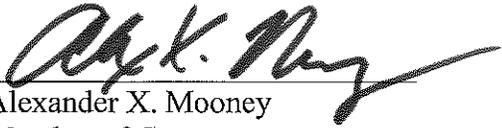

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Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress
Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress
William R. Keating
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Frank C. Guinta
Member of Congress



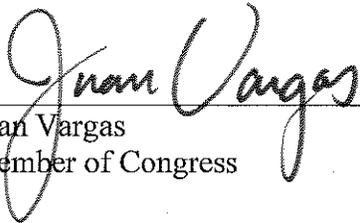
Martha McSally
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Alexander X. Mooney
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Andy Barr
Member of Congress



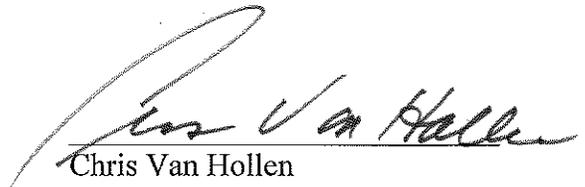
Juan Vargas
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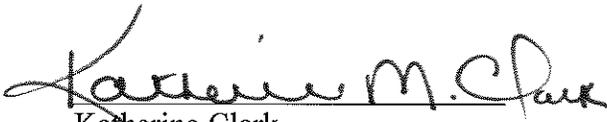
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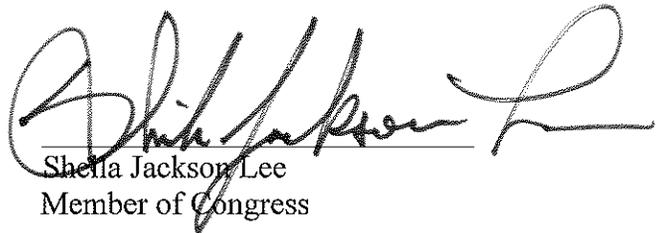
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Katherine Clark
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Shella Jackson Lee
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Eric Swalwell
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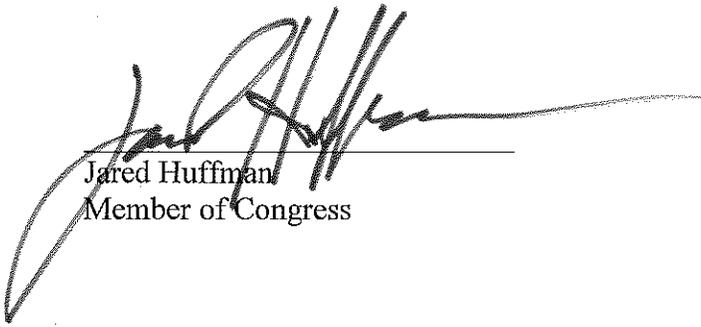
Mike Thompson
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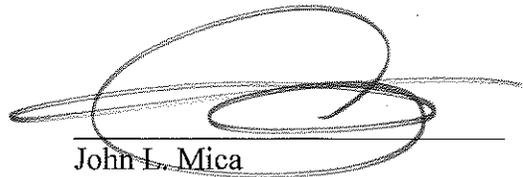
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Ryan Costello
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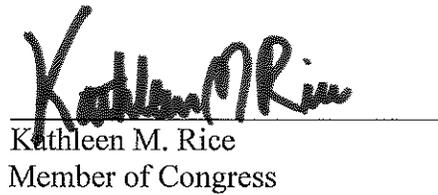
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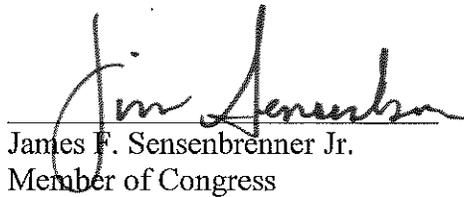
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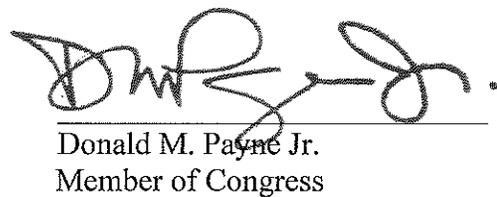
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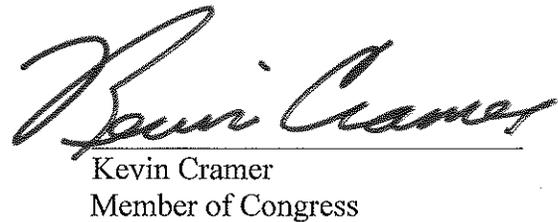
James F. Sensenbrenner Jr.
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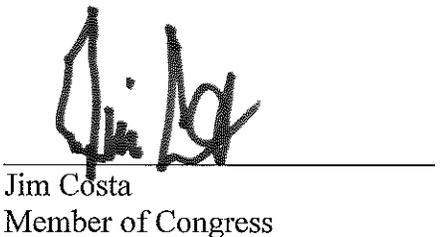
Donald M. Payne Jr.
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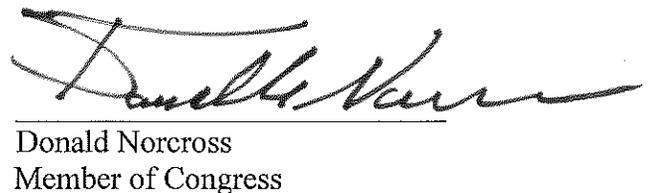
Mark DeSaulnier
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Jim Costa
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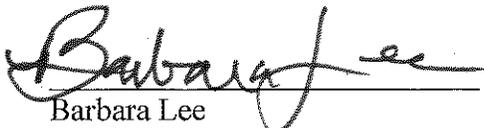
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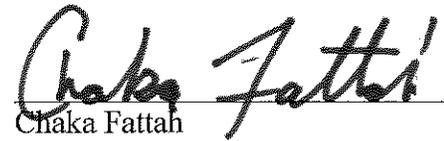


Ami Bera, M.D.
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Member of Congress

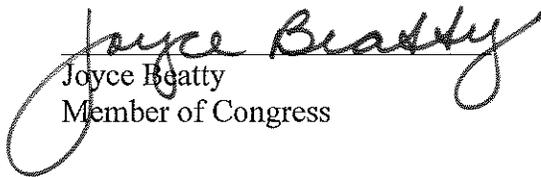

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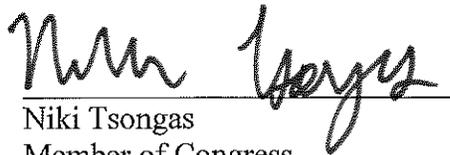

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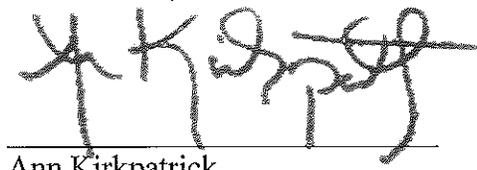

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

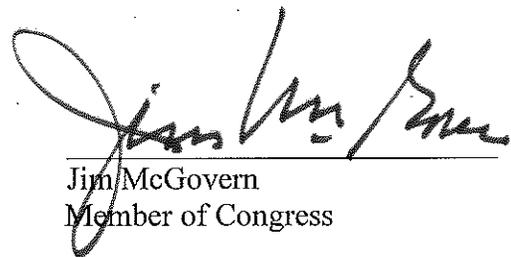

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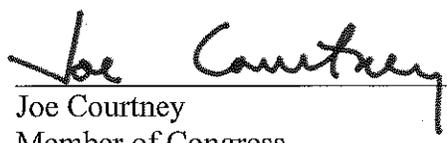

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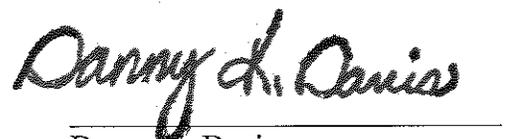

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

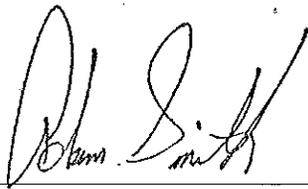

Gwen Moore
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Daniel Lipinski
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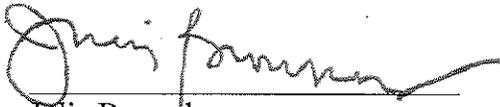
Dennis A. Ross
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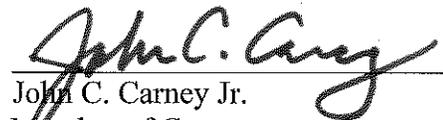
Scott Rigell
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Suzanne Bonamici
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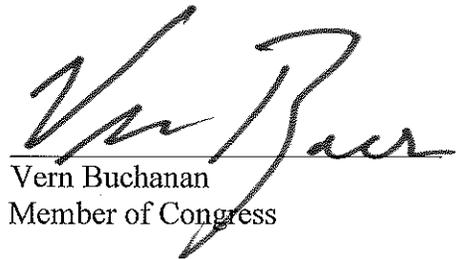
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



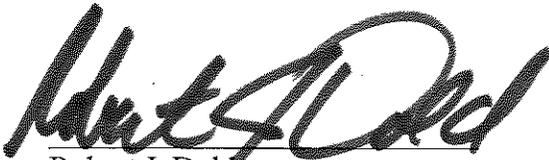
John C. Carney Jr.
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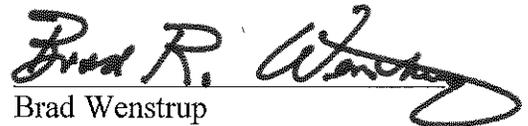
John K. Delaney
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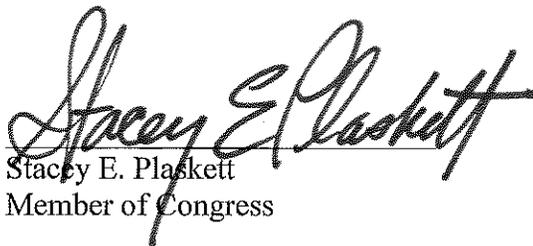
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Brad Wenstrup
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Stacey E. Plaskett
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Cheri Bustos
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Filemon Vela
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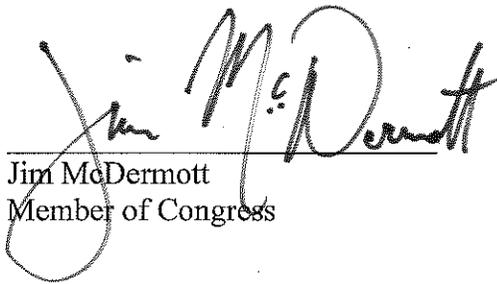
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