

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 8, 2018

Hon. Mick Mulvaney, Director
Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Mulvaney:

As members of the Bipartisan Heroin Task Force, we are deeply concerned by recent reports regarding the proposed changes to the budget and role of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). News reports indicate that ONDCP's budget could be cut by up to ninety-five percent, its staff dramatically reduced, and the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) and Drug-Free Communities (DFC) programs removed from its jurisdiction.

As you know, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported that there were more than 63,600 drug overdose deaths in the United States in 2016. The majority of those involved prescription opioids, heroin, or synthetic opioids like fentanyl. We are losing over 170 Americans every day to this crisis.

Both the Administration and Members of Congress from both parties have indicated that addressing this epidemic is a matter of highest priority. We believe that a strong ONDCP is a critical component of an effective and aggressive response to the devastation that heroin, opioids, and other drugs are causing in our communities.

ONDCP not only provides indispensable expertise and analysis, it helps develop and coordinate drug policy across the many departments and agencies of the Federal government, including the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), as well as the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the CDC and other efforts within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This is a challenging task under any circumstances. Reducing its budget, staff, and role will only harm ONDCP's ability to fulfil this unique and already difficult mission.

In addition, there are HIDTA-designated counties in 49 states, as well as Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia. Likewise, the Drug-Free Communities Support program is an important grant program that aims to strengthen collaboration among communities, public agencies, and private non-profit agencies to reduce substance abuse among youth. These programs do an enormous amount of good and we express our strong support for them.

We respectfully request that you support the important work being conducted by the ONDCP in the Administration's budget request. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Tom MacArthur
Co-Chair
Bipartisan Heroin Task Force



Ann McLane Kuster
Co-Chair
Bipartisan Heroin Task Force

Brian Fitzpatrick
Vice-Chair
Bipartisan Heroin Task Force

Donald Norcross
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Member of Congress

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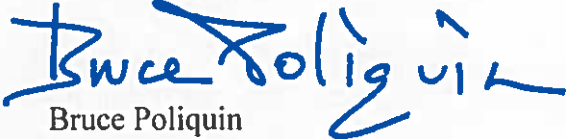
Ted Deutch
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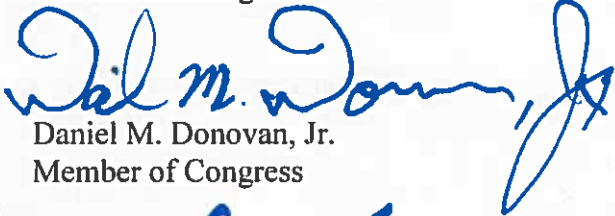
Peter T. King
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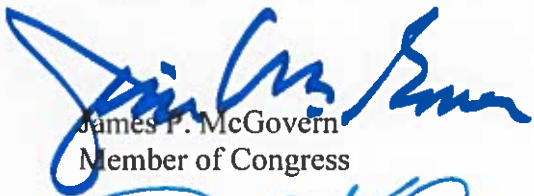
Andy Barr
Member of Congress



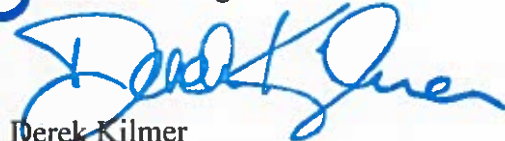
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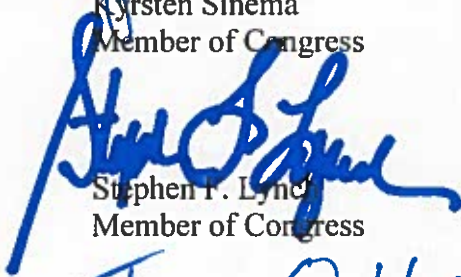
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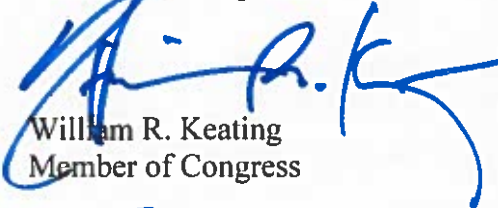
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Stephanie Murphy
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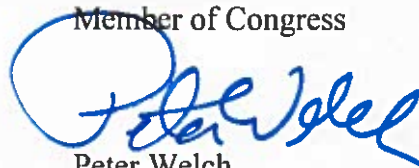
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