

Chairman Hal Rogers
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Budget Hearing – Fiscal Year 2025 Request for the Drug Enforcement Administration
May 7, 2024

Good morning,

The Subcommittee will come to order. Without objection, the Chair is authorized to declare a recess at any time.

Administrator Milgram, I would like to welcome you to the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Subcommittee today to testify regarding the Drug Enforcement Administration's fiscal year 2025 budget request.

On a personal note, I would also like to thank you for your attendance earlier this year at the annual RxSummit in Atlanta.

Your passion for the efforts to combat the drug epidemic is commendable and your presence at the summit was greatly appreciated.

Before we delve into the specifics of the budget request, I want to address a broader theme that has emerged in our examination of the DEA's operations.

While the mission of the DEA remains crucial, and the commitment of Administrator Milgram appears sincere, it is evident that the support the agency receives from both the Department of Justice and this Administration in general, is lacking.

Recent remarks by the Attorney General and FBI Director regarding our law enforcement relationship with key partners have raised concerns.

Three weeks ago, when discussing law enforcement cooperation with Mexico, the FBI Director testified "I'm pleased with what we have gotten, but we need a lot more."

When the DEA encounters obstacles such as difficulties in securing visas in a timely manner for agents to operate in Mexico and there are outstanding warrants that the Mexican government fails to act upon, it suggests that the state of our relationship with Mexico may be far from ideal.

Additionally, it is troubling that the DEA Administrator, despite her efforts, has not been able to secure a single meeting with a Mexican government official since assuming her position.

This lack of engagement, the nonsensical bureaucratic delay in approving visas, and blatantly ignoring extradition requests for cartel members should be far from pleasing for anyone who cares about our efforts to combat the cartels.

Furthermore, despite this administration's announcement in November 2023 that it has secured China's cooperation to take steps to curtail the transit of Fentanyl precursor chemicals, tangible progress in this regard seems to be lacking and more work remains to be done.

In fiscal year 2024, our subcommittee was faced with a challenging allocation which required significant cuts to many critical agency's budgets.

Despite this, the DEA was the only law enforcement agency to receive an increase in funding.

I believe this speaks to our commitment to the mission of the DEA and our hope for your success.

Notably, the largest increase in the DEA's FY25 budget request is for the expansion of the DEA's Counter Threat Targeting Teams.

While this expansion is commendable, we must ensure that these investments yield measurable results – and that includes buy in from the Department of Justice.

The Attorney General's testimony before this subcommittee two weeks ago highlighted a concerning sentiment regarding the DEA's role in combating the Fentanyl crisis.

When describing the whole of government approach this Administration is taking to combat fentanyl, the Attorney General noted Treasury's role in sanctions, Homeland's role in border security, the FBI's role in investigating cartels, the Marshals role in securing fugitives, and then said "the DEA has, at the very end of the line, a public affairs campaign."

The perception that the DEA's role is limited to an education campaign undermines the agency's vital enforcement efforts.

Nevertheless, we continue to believe in the mission of the DEA and recognize its importance in the war on drugs.

Administrator Milgram, we look forward to hearing from you today about the DEA's plans for fiscal year 2025 and how the agency intends to address the challenges we have outlined.

I am especially interested in hearing your frank and honest assessment of our law enforcement relationship with Mexico, your agency's assessment of any progress in stopping Chinese precursor chemicals, and whether the DEA is truly receiving the support it needs from this Administration.

Thank you for being here, and I yield back the balance of my time.

At this time, I would like to recognize Mr. Cartwright for any remarks he may wish to make.