



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY
Washington, D.C. 20503

**“The Trump Administration’s Response to
the Drug Crisis, Part II”**

Committee on Oversight and Reform
United States House of Representatives

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2154 Rayburn House Office Building

Written Statement of
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Introduction

Chairman Cummings and Ranking Member Jordan, thank you for the opportunity to appear before this Committee today to discuss the work that the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) is doing with its Federal partners and stakeholders to address the Nation's current drug problem.

The current drug crisis is unparalleled in its severity and scope and requires an innovative and comprehensive response. That is why I transformed ONDCP's structure to be more flexible and adaptive to this crisis, focusing on the opioid, cocaine, and emerging drug threats, using the expertise and knowledge of an increased number of detailees from many of our partner agencies, and coordinating with the White House's National Security and Domestic Policy Councils. This innovative and comprehensive response is encapsulated in the Administration's recently issued *National Drug Control Strategy (Strategy)*, which provides concise and targeted policy direction to Executive Branch drug control agencies.

Follow-up to the March 7, 2019, Hearing

I have ensured that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has received all of the documents it had requested of ONDCP prior to the March 7, 2019, hearing. ONDCP has also provided an additional 1,252 pages in response to 15 additional document requests that we received from GAO since that hearing. Importantly, the most senior members of my staff have met with GAO staff on six occasions since that hearing to provide additional information and documentation of interest to GAO. Those meetings included three meetings on the GAO's primary ONDCP engagement, one meeting on the GAO's synthetic opioids engagement, one

meeting on the GAO's records management engagement, and one meeting to discuss GAO's best practices for strategic planning, a meeting that was beneficial for both offices.

The National Drug Control Strategy

On January 31, 2019, we released the Trump Administration's *National Drug Control Strategy*. It was drafted in 2018 prior to the enactment of ONDCP's 2018 reauthorization and was, therefore, prepared under our prior reauthorization. While fully compliant with the 2006 reauthorization's strategy content requirements, the 2019 *National Drug Control Strategy* differs from previous *Strategies* in that it provides a succinct and focused vision for addressing the drug crisis. In this respect, it is akin to other congressionally mandated strategies, such as the *National Security Strategy* and *National Defense Strategy*, as well as the *National Cyber Strategy*, strategies that focus on other critically important national security issues. Similar in scope, breadth, and length to these strategies, the 2019 *National Drug Control Strategy* provides our Federal, state, local, and tribal government partners and non-governmental stakeholders with the necessary policy guidance to budget resources and implement effective programming to reduce the availability of, and demand for, illicit drugs and the consequences of their use.

Consistent with past practice, the *National Drug Control Strategy* is actually comprised of the main policy document and three companion documents in response to the requirements in ONDCP's 2006 reauthorization; these documents include:

- *National Drug Control Strategy*—the primary policy document, which details the Administration's long-term policy and budget priorities in the areas of prevention, treatment and recovery, and reducing the availability of illicit drugs. The *Strategy* is fully

responsive to the former 21 USC § 1705(a)(1), which required that the President formulate a strategy, “which shall set forth a comprehensive plan for the year to reduce illicit drug use and the consequences of such illicit drug use in the United States by limiting the availability of, and reducing the demand for, illegal drugs.”

- *National Drug Control Strategy: Budget and Performance Summary*—provides the details of the drug control budget that supports the implementation of the *Strategy* and performance metrics for each drug control program agency. The *Budget and Performance Summary* is responsive to the former 21 USC § 1703(c), which required the Director to “develop a consolidated National Drug Control Program budget proposal designed to implement the National Drug Control Strategy and to inform Congress and the public about the total amount proposed to be spent on all supply reduction, demand reduction, State, local, and tribal affairs, including any drug law enforcement, and other drug control activities by the Federal Government.”
- *National Drug Control Strategy: Data Supplement*—provides a series of more than 150 tables presenting the data on which ONDCP relies to formulate, implement, and assess the progress toward achieving the goals and objectives of the *Strategy*. Through the *Data Supplement*, ONDCP provides an assessment of a variety of drug-related indicators, including, but not limited to, drug-induced mortality and morbidity, prevalence of use, treatment need and receipt, illicit drug price and purity, the amount of drugs available for consumption in the United States, and the amount of drug crops eradicated. The *Data Supplement* provides this information to the extent that relevant data are available.
- *National Drug Control Strategy: Performance Reporting System*—provides the goals and objectives for the *Strategy* and the two- and five-year targets and metrics for tracking

progress in achieving them. Through the *Performance Reporting System*, ONDCP provides comprehensive, research-based, long-range, quantifiable goals for reducing illicit drug use and the consequences of illicit drug use in the United States, as well as annual quantifiable and measurable objectives and specific targets to accomplish long-term quantifiable goals. As Congress acknowledged with ONDCP's 2018 reauthorization, it is not possible for an incoming Administration to produce a *Strategy* within the first two weeks of its term; however, the *Performance Reporting System* establishes 2017 as the baseline for assessing progress toward achieving the *Strategy*'s goals and objectives. The *Performance Reporting System* was formulated following the attributes of effective performance management as articulated by GAO¹; specifically, it is consistent with the following attributes:

- Is there a relationship between the performance goals and measures and an agency's goals and mission?
- Are the performance measures clearly stated?
- Do the performance measures have targets, thus allowing for easier comparison with actual performance?
- Are the performance goals and measures objective?
- To what extent do the performance goals and measures provide a reliable way to assess progress?
- Do the performance measures sufficiently cover a program's core activities?
- Does there appear to be limited overlap among the performance measures?
- Does there appear to be a balance among the performance goals and measures, or is there an emphasis on one or two priorities at the expense of others?

¹ See GAO, *Tax Administration: IRS Needs to Further Refine Its Tax Filing Season Performance Measures*, GAO-03-143 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 22, 2002).

- Does the program or activity have performance goals and measures that cover government-wide priorities?

All four of these *National Drug Control Strategy* documents have been submitted to Congress and posted on ONDCP's website.

Formulation of the National Drug Control Budget

In our recent meetings with GAO and Committee staff, interest was expressed in how ONDCP was able to provide budget guidance in calendar years 2017 and 2018 to national drug control agencies and formulate a consolidated national drug control budget for fiscal years (FYs) 2019 and 2020 in the absence of a *National Drug Control Strategy*. It is critical to note that ONDCP did issue funding guidance and properly formulated the FY 2019 and FY 2020 drug control budgets. During this period, ONDCP looked to other sources for drug policy priorities.

For the development of the FY 2019 drug control budget in calendar year 2017, ONDCP relied upon the following sources for drug policy guidance:

- *Candidate Donald J. Trump's Plan to End the Opioid Epidemic in America and subsequent relevant information.* Issued on October 15, 2016, this plan emphasized the need to increase treatment to address the opioid epidemic, increase first responders' access to naloxone, prevent the trafficking of illicitly produced fentanyl from China via U.S. mail services, increase the development of abuse deterrent opioid medications, and reduce the diversion of controlled medications.
- *The President's Joint Address to Congress on February 28, 2017.* In his remarks to Congress, the President reiterated his support for expanding treatment and reducing the availability of illicit drugs in the United States.

- *The FY 2018 President's Budget.* In 2017, the Administration released the FY 2018 Budget that addressed its priorities. In discussions with my budget staff, many of whom have been at ONDCP for decades, I was informed that what occurred in 2017 was very similar to what had happened in the absence of a *Strategy* in the first year of previous Administrations.
- *Meetings with Cabinet officials.* In 2017, the ONDCP Acting Director met with the Secretaries of Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, Education, and State and the Attorney General to discuss supply and demand reduction policies and programs.
- *The President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis.* On March 29, 2017, the President issued Executive Order 13784, establishing the Commission. ONDCP was designated as the primary support agency for the Commission and provided substantial input to the Commission's activities and recommendations.

All of these sources were consulted by ONDCP in developing the guidance for drug control agencies to follow in preparing their FY 2019 drug control budget requests.

For the development of the FY 2020 funding guidance in calendar year 2018, ONDCP relied upon the following sources for drug policy priorities:

- *The Final Report of the President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis.* The final report was issued on November 1, 2017, and contained 56 recommendations (in addition to incorporating at least nine recommendations from the Interim Report for a total of 65), the vast majority of which had input from ONDCP.

- *The President's Initiative to Stop Opioid Abuse and Reduce Drug Demand and Supply.*

Issued on March 19, 2018, the Initiative covers three areas: (1) reduce demand and over prescription; (2) cut off the supply of illicit drugs; and (3) help those struggling with addiction. Specifics of the Initiative include: a public awareness campaign to warn of the dangers of prescription drug misuse and the use of illicit opioids and other drugs; reducing the over-prescription of controlled medications; securing U.S. borders and ports of entry against drug trafficking; working with partner nations to reduce the trafficking of illicit drugs into the United States; shutting down internet sites dealing in illicit drugs; ensuring adequate supplies of naloxone for first responders; and expanding access to medication-assisted treatment.

Upon issuance of the funding guidance for both FY 2019 and FY 2020 drug control budgets, ONDCP followed the normal process for assessing the adequacy of the agency budgets to support the *Strategy*:

- Agency summer budget submissions were reviewed and assessed as to whether they complied with ONDCP funding guidance;
- Letters to agency heads noting whether the budgets were in compliance and, if not, what remedial steps were required;
- Review of agency fall budget submissions to determine if they were adequate to support the *Strategy*, and whether they should be certified;
- Preparation of the consolidated drug control budget; and
- Review of agency financial plans.

Conclusion

I am honored by the President's nomination and the Congress' confirmation of me as the ONDCP Director. It is a privilege for me to lead ONDCP and coordinate the efforts of 15 other drug control agencies in addressing the Nation's drug crisis. The death and destruction of individuals, families, and communities from its ravages are a daily reminder to me and everyone involved in this struggle that we must be relentless in our efforts to end this scourge on our Nation. With the issuance of the 2019 *National Drug Control Strategy* main policy document and its companion documents, the Nation has a comprehensive and focused plan for addressing the crisis that includes long-term goals and objectives that are quantifiable and measurable and that is supported by funds sufficient to implement it. I am fully committed to leading this effort and working with Congress to achieve our common goals and objectives.