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

The Trump Administration's Response to the Drug Crisis

Committee on Oversight and Reform
United States House of Representatives

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Written Statement of
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Introduction

On behalf of President Trump and the American people, I want to thank the Committee for inviting me to testify today. I also want to sincerely thank the Committee for its steadfast support of ONDCP, especially through your recent work to develop the first reauthorization in twelve years, which places the agency in an optimal position to meet its responsibilities to the American people.

As you are all well aware, our Nation is currently facing the most dynamic and challenging drug environment in its history. The opioid epidemic; the rapid rise in the trafficking and use of synthetic opioids and psychoactive substances such as methamphetamine; a stark increase in the availability and use of cocaine in the United States; and the increasingly diverse ways in which illicit drugs are being marketed, purchased, and shipped into the country all demand a clear and concise national strategy for addressing these challenges and an ONDCP that is organized for innovation, agility, and a relentless focus on tangible results, right now and as we move further into the 21st century.

The National Drug Control Strategy

On January 31, we released the Trump Administration's *National Drug Control Strategy* (*Strategy*). The *Strategy* is much different from previous *Strategies* and improves on them in fundamental ways. As a fully formed strategy akin to the *National Security Strategy*, this forward-looking document has a clearly defined vision that weaves together ways, means, and results; mutually supportive lines of effort; and broad metrics to assess aggregate interagency progress throughout its implementation. At a deliberately succinct and focused twenty pages, the *Strategy's* three major chapters address the primary lines of effort to advance the President's principal goal of reducing deaths and, in his words, creating a "stronger, healthier, drug-free society": education and prevention; treatment and recovery; and reducing the availability of drugs in America. It then has sub-sections that clearly address the specific activities that support each line of effort. There should be no doubt after reading this document that one of the President's top priorities is to address the current opioid crisis. This will result in a reduction of

the number of Americans dying from drug overdoses, and then positioning ourselves to address emerging drug environments in the future.

This *Strategy* addresses a complex problem in the sophisticated manner it deserves. We cannot address this current environment using the same approach or same strategic structure that we have in decades past. This *Strategy* speaks to the complex interplay between the availability of drugs and their improper use, the means to prevent that very short step between first use and inappropriate chronic use, and the imperative to provide treatment that leads to long-term recovery. Reducing availability for improper use is not a separate function, as was the case with drug-supply reduction in years past, but rather a complementary line of effort that can relieve the pressure on our public health system while prevention and treatment efforts take hold, reducing the size of the active user population to create healthier individuals and safer communities, and also lessen the pull of illicit drugs across our borders. In short, our *Strategy* reflects an in-depth understanding of the environment, the ways and means to address it today to save American lives, and the manner in which we must actively anticipate its changes and shape the future to our advantage.

After we released the *Strategy*, ONDCP held the first of a series of interagency meetings to begin the process of its interagency implementation, the first time this has been done. In addition, we are accelerating the completion and release of the National Drug Control Strategy Data Supplement, which contains the full complement of drug trafficking and usage trends, as well as their sources, that guide our collective understanding of the drug environment in the United States. As part of the release of the Data Supplement, we will include a list of quantifiable 2- and 5-year benchmarks to measure our progress over the life of the *Strategy*. These benchmarks will be tied directly to the Measures of Performance and Measures of Effectiveness provided in the *Strategy* and will be designed to assess aggregate interagency effectiveness of *Strategy* implementation going forward.

Transformation of the Office of National Drug Control Policy

The ONDCP structure that was created in ONDCP's 2006 reauthorization had three large and relatively independent components focused on Supply Reduction, Demand Reduction, and State, Local, and Tribal Affairs, which served the agency well for many years. However, it is clear that this structure is insufficient to meet our needs now and in the years to come, especially given the statutory mandates in ONDCP's current reauthorization. Therefore, on January 31 I informed Congress and stakeholders of my intent to transform ONDCP's operating structure. This new structure: reinforces those elements of ONDCP that Congress mandated in the reauthorization and have thus far proven successful in addressing the complex national security, law enforcement, and public health challenge we face; brings together our availability reduction and public health efforts to focus on tangible outcomes; reduces redundancy and management overhead; and focuses ONDCP on its core function.

Our new structure includes a team specifically dedicated to Public, Health, Education, and Treatment and institutes a reconfigured National Opioids and Synthetics Coordination Group, along with the National Cocaine Coordination Group and the United States Interdiction Coordinator. Each Coordination Group has embedded staff with specialties in public health, research, and law enforcement, bringing efforts against drug trafficking together with public health outcomes in a comprehensive fashion.

This new structure moves subject-matter advisors to the Director into daily operations, and focuses ONDCP on its core mission. Moreover, the new structure better integrates our accomplished High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) and Drug Free Communities (DFC) programs into ONDCP's core policymaking function, increasing our ability to work closely with our state, local, and tribal partners in their law enforcement and drug use prevention efforts.

This new structure also creates an Office of Performance and Budget with both Internal Budget and Interagency Budget Divisions, eliminating the previous redundancy and inefficiency of two different budget offices located in two different components and better executing our statutory

budget oversight function.

By flattening the organization and building it around an agile and dynamic core policymaking function, ONDCP is better able to focus on the major present-day and emerging drug threats, and bring our three lines of effort -- prevention, treatment, and reducing availability -- together in a unified fashion to link performance and effectiveness, all to achieve tangible results. Every member of the ONDCP team understands we must be focused on saving lives.

ONDCP's Reauthorization

I would like to thank the Congress for reauthorizing ONDCP. For almost a year before my confirmation in January, I had the privilege of working closely with the great professionals in ONDCP and saw for myself the superlative work they do. I also had the opportunity to hear perspectives on ONDCP from our stakeholders across the country, our interagency partners, and Members of the House and Senate. From those interactions, three major themes continually emerged.

First, ONDCP's reauthorization has increased certainty on how ONDCP will operate moving forward. This was particularly important to the hundreds of stakeholder organizations across the country who count on ONDCP's partnership in their individual efforts and look to ONDCP's leadership in advancing our collective endeavors to reduce illicit drug use and its many negative consequences. Second, we needed to publish a concise and high-quality *National Drug Control Strategy* that establishes the President's priorities and sets the course for the next several years -- and I am proud to say we have done that. And third, we needed to bring together -- in a unified fashion -- our expertise in reducing the availability of drugs for improper use in the United States with our expertise in public health efforts to prevent drug abuse and misuse before they start and provide quality treatment and long-term recovery.

ONDCP's reauthorization provides clear guidance and direction in those areas where Congress would like to see more focus and effort: the identification of emerging drug threats; public health and demand-reduction efforts; working more closely with our state, local, and tribal partners;

executing ONDCP's budget responsibilities and better tracking performance; and maximizing the capability of the United States Interdiction Coordinator.

While we are fully implementing those elements of the reauthorization that require the identification of specific positions, ONDCP's new structure is designed to bring greater capability to bear on all those areas on which Congress sought increased emphasis from ONDCP. We are convinced this new structure meets Congress's intent. As we move forward in finalizing our new structure and aligning it with all the necessary elements of our reauthorization, I will keep you informed of our progress.

Conclusion

In the few short months since the President signed ONDCP's reauthorization into law and I was confirmed as ONDCP Director, and particularly given the recent lapse in appropriations, ONDCP has taken significant initial steps to issue an Administration strategy to address the very significant drug-use issues affecting our Nation and has restructured its operation to more effectively implement that strategy. I look forward to working with the Committee to address our shared goals of reducing the number of Americans who die every single day from drug abuse and building a stronger, healthier, and drug-free society.