H.R. 2829: Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 2006

Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources (5-2577, www.reform.house.gov/CJDPHR/)

What is the ONDCP?

Congress created the ONDCP in 1988 to be the primary shaper, coordinator and proponent of Federal policies targeted at reducing the impact of drug abuse and its consequences in our society and communities. The Director of the ONDCP, popularly known as the "Drug Czar," advises the President on drug control policy and strategy, reviews and certifies the budgets of national drug control programs and works to ensure their effective coordination.

What does the reauthorization do?

The bill reauthorizes the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) within the Executive Office of the President for five years, through the end of FY 2011. It also renews congressional authorization for national programs administered by ONDCP, including the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign and the High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program. The legislation includes several provisions aimed at making the development and implementation of Federal drug policy more streamlined, effective and accountable to accomplish the President's goal of achieving specific reductions in drug use in America.

What are some of the main highlights?

- **Rank and status of ONDCP Director** – the bill requires that the ONDCP Director have the same rank and status as other executive department heads. Though this will not interfere with the President's authority to define the membership of his cabinet, it *will* ensure that the Drug Czar will be able to interact *as an equal* with the other executive department heads. This is crucial, as he is responsible for coordination and oversight of anti-drug policies and programs of all the departments.

- **Retain key authorities** – the bill reaffirms the role of the ONDCP Director as the principal Administration official with respect to drug policy, including the authority to develop, coordinate and oversee the implementation of drug control policy and to set drug control budgets for various federal agencies.
- **Enhances effectiveness and accountability in drug treatment** – the bill also attempts to enhance drug treatment programs by requiring for the first time a uniform system of evaluating the success of drug treatment. Further, the Director is prohibited from certifying any federal budget request related to drug treatment that does not provide for adequate result and accountability measures.
- **Enhances the Media Campaign** – the bill also takes steps to ensure that the national youth anti-drug media campaign, 1) retains its intended focus on supporting advertising to prevent youth drug use and, 2) remains effective and accountable. The bill directs most drug prevention program funding to be matched on an equal basis by the private sector. It also enhances accountability by ensuring that the campaign's effectiveness can be directly tested and measured, and it provides for the future termination of any media campaign contracts for fraud or contract irregularity.
- **Preserves and strengthens the HIDTA program** – The High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program is ONDCP's principal law enforcement program. Under this uniquely successful and innovative program, the Director designates a specific geographic region as a "HIDTA." Each HIDTA is then eligible to receive Federal assistance and funding for joint Federal, State and local law enforcement initiatives targeting drug trafficking activity. Its formula of joint decision-making and action between Federal, State and local officials has been a model of law enforcement teamwork in counter-narcotics. The bill preserves and strengthens those unique aspects of HIDTA that have made it a notable success.
- **Requires greater diligence on methamphetamine** – the bill requires that future installments of the National Drug Control Strategy place greater emphasis on identifying

emerging threats and being ready with strategies to deal with them. This applies the lessons of the meth epidemic, which became national before any national attempt to control it.

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