

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Mike Quigley
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services
2458 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Graves
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services
2078 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Quigley and Ranking Member Graves:

We write in strong support for funding the Drug-Free Communities (DFC) program in FY 2021 at a minimum of \$101.250 million, the final FY 2020 appropriated level. We also ask that you include \$2.5 million from within the total amount appropriated for the DFC program to fund the training and technical assistance component of the program, as specifically authorized in section 8204 of P.L. 115-271. Finally, consistent with the Congressional intent outlined in the SUPPORT Act, we request that the DFC program, along with the Community Based Coalition Enhancement Grant program (Section 103) of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) (P.L. 114-198), remain at the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP).

As our states continue to combat the opioid, stimulant and youth vaping epidemics, the Drug-Free Communities program has been an effective tool in reducing youth substance use. According to independent research (ICF International, National Evaluation of the Drug-Free Communities Support Program, June 2019 Report), in communities where DFC coalitions exist, rates of past 30-day use among middle school students for alcohol, tobacco and marijuana declined at 30.7%, 45.2% and 16.2% respectively. Among high school students in DFC-funded communities, rates for alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and prescription drugs declined by 23.0%, 43.8%, 7.6% and 24.6% respectively.¹ Currently, 713 communities across the nation have Drug-Free Communities Coalitions that provide support to 2.5 million and 3.6 million high school students.

The Drug-Free Communities Program is structured to ensure effectiveness, outcomes, and sustainability. It requires a community to demonstrate local commitment before becoming eligible to receive federal funds. This includes participation from at least 12 sectors in the community. All grantees are required to provide a dollar-for-dollar match in non-federal funds, up to the maximum grant amount of \$125,000 per year. The required emphasis on local data collection, community buy-in and participation among multiple sectors is central to DFC coalitions' success. This emphasis also allows DFC coalitions to respond effectively at the local

¹ ICF International, the Drug Free Communities Support Program National Evaluation Team. "Drug-Free Communities Support Program National Evaluation: 2018 National Evaluation End-of-Year Report." June 2019. Page 42.

level to all new and emerging drug trends, such as heroin, meth, K2, spice, bath salts, fentanyl, and the youth vaping epidemic.

The national evaluation for the DFC program has had impressive results. These are due to ONDCP's consistent, high-level leadership and commitment in managing all the policy level components of the program, including prioritizing data collection and analysis to enable the DFC program to show both national level outcomes for the entire program and local outcomes for every grantee.

Moving the DFC and CARA section 103 enhancement grant programs out of ONDCP and into the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) would have a negative impact on the program's administration. Specifically, this move into the CDC would undermine several legal requirements of the program that ensure both its cost effectiveness and direct relationship between the federal and community levels. Furthermore, moving this critical program out of ONDCP's jurisdiction would severely impact the program's effectiveness by limiting its essential partners and strategies and force the program to compete with other non-drug prevention priorities for funding.

We urge you to fund the Drug-Free Communities Program in FY 2021 at a minimum of \$101.250 million and leave the program intact and funded in ONDCP. This will ensure the maximum number of communities are equipped to effectively reduce all types of youth substance use and have the evaluation results to prove it.

Sincerely,



Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



Bill Johnson
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

FY2021 Members of Congress Signing:

John Yarmuth	Suzanne Bonamici	André Carson
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Peter A. DeFazio	David Trone	Mike Levin
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Brian Fitzpatrick	Alcee L. Hastings	Adam Smith
Jenniffer González-Colón	Val Demings	Elise M. Stefanik
James P. McGovern	Danny K. Davis	Jerry McNerney
Paul D. Tonko	Stacey E. Plaskett	Ben Ray Luján
Eric Swalwell	Raúl Grijalva	Terri A. Sewell
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Christopher H. Smith	Jared Huffman	Hakeem Jeffries
David Rouzer	Tom Suozzi	Don Young
Lucille Roybal-Allard	Aumua Amata Radewagen	Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.

	John Katko	Juan Vargas
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