

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 16, 2025

The Honorable David Joyce
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services
2000 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Joyce and Ranking Member Hoyer:

We write in strong support of funding the Drug-Free Communities (DFC) program at the highest possible level in Fiscal Year 2026. At a minimum, we are requesting that the program be maintained at \$109 million, as in the House and Senate versions of the Fiscal Year 2025 Financial Services and General Government appropriations (FSGG) bills. We also ask that you include \$2.5 million from within the total amount appropriated in FY 2026 for the DFC program (level with the House and Senate versions of the FY 2025 bills) to fund the training and technical assistance component of the program, as specifically authorized in section 8204 of P.L. 115-271. We oppose any proposals to move the DFC program out of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and the jurisdiction of the FSGG appropriations subcommittee into the Department of Health and Human Services. Such a move would put this highly effective substance use prevention program's funding at great risk.

As communities continue to combat the opioid, stimulant and polydrug epidemics facing our nation, the DFC program has been an extremely cost-effective tool in reducing youth substance use to levels much lower than those in non-funded communities. According to independent research, in communities where DFC coalitions exist, rates of past 30-day substance use among middle school students for alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and prescription drugs declined by 28.8%, 26.9%, 29.4%, and 26.9% respectively among FY 2022 DFC coalitions. Among high school students, past 30-day use rates for alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and prescription drugs declined by 33.9%, 39.8%, 30.5% and 43.2% respectively among FY 2022 DFC coalitions.¹ In 2023, there were DFC coalitions in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and three U.S. territories (Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands). An estimated 75 million people live in communities served by DFC coalitions that received funding in 2023. This includes approximately 3 million middle school youth and 4 million high school youth.²

The DFC 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 of the community. All grantees are required to provide a dollar-for-dollar match in non-federal funds, up to the maximum amount of \$125,000 per year. The required emphasis on local data collection, community buy-in

¹ ICF. (October 2024). Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program National Cross-Site Evaluation: End-of-Year 2023 Report. Washington, DC: Office of National Drug Control Policy.

² *Ibid.*

and participation among multiple sectors is central to DFC coalitions' success. This emphasis also allows DFC coalitions to respond effectively at the local level to all new and existing drug trends, such as meth, cocaine, opioids, fentanyl, other synthetic drugs and youth vaping.

Substance use prevention to stop and delay substance use is already underfunded and underutilized relative to its ability to address the costs and consequences of drug use. Given that the DFC program has demonstrated major results in reducing youth drug use with tiny investments of federal funds at the community level, it is imperative that the program and its funding be protected.

We urge you to fund the DFC program at the highest possible level in FY 2026 and to keep the program in ONDCP and funded in the FSGG appropriations subcommittee. This will ensure that the maximum number of communities around the country are optimally equipped to reduce population levels of youth substance use and demonstrate effectiveness through data driven outcomes.


Sincerely,



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Paul Tonko
Member of Congress



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress

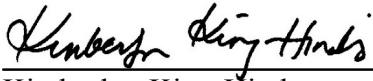


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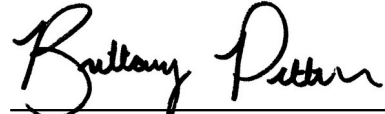
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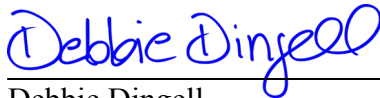
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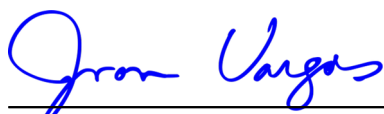
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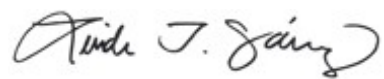
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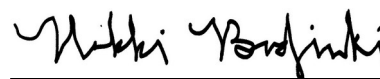
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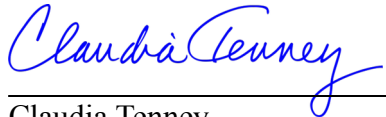
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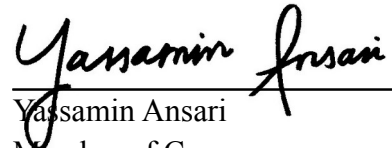
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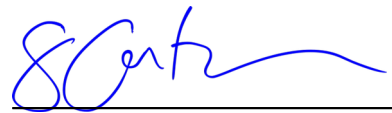
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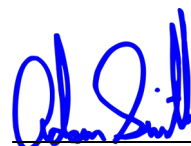
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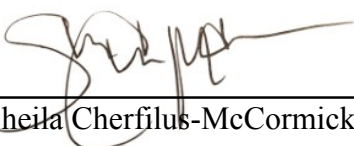
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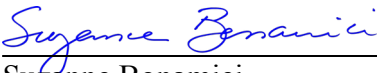
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