

SHERROD BROWN  
OHIO

COMMITTEES:  
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,  
AND FORESTRY  
APPROPRIATIONS  
BANKING, HOUSING,  
AND URBAN AFFAIRS  
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 30, 2011

Gil Kerlikowske  
Director  
White House Office of National Drug Control Policy  
750 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington D.C. 20006

Dear Director Kerlikowske:

I am writing to express my strong support for the applications of both Adams and Scioto Counties to receive designation as High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) by the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Prescription drug abuse has become an epidemic in Ohio, as it has been across the nation. In recent years, more Ohioans have died from prescription drug overdoses than car accidents. In 2008, statistics show that Oxycodone and other prescription drugs caused more overdoses in Ohio that year than heroin and cocaine combined. It is estimated that prescription drug overdoses cost Ohio taxpayers \$3.7 billion annually in hospital expenses. Nearly every day in Ohio, there are reports of lives lost to prescription drug abuse and neighborhoods plagued by drug-related crime.

Southern Ohio has been particularly devastated by the scourge of prescription drug abuse and crime. Adams County witnessed 23 prescription-drug overdose deaths in 2009—one for every 740 people in the County. In Scioto County between 2000 and 2008, 117 people died of accidental drug overdoses. Further, in Adams and Scioto Counties in 2010, 40-45% more opiates were dispensed per capita than the state average.

To effectively combat the prescription drug problems facing Adams and Scioto Counties, we must provide local law enforcement with the tools to do so. HIDTA designation will help those fighting on the front lines of prescription drug epidemic to decrease the availability of dangerous prescription drugs and mitigate the harm to communities in southern Ohio. With the lingering effects of a tough economy threatening the availability of local law enforcement resources, this designation is needed now more than ever.

Thank you for your consideration and for your efforts to combat drug trafficking throughout the nation.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator