

United States Senate

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COMMITTEES
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November 21, 2018

Mr. James Carroll
Acting Director
Office of National Drug Control Policy
750 17th St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20503

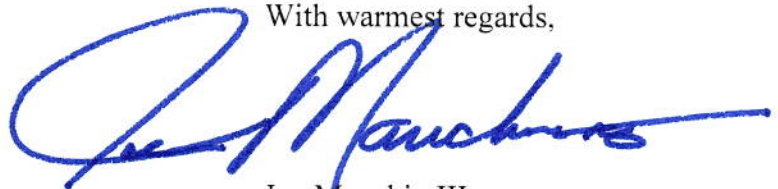
Dear Acting Director Carroll:

My home state of West Virginia has gained notoriety recently due to the horrific increase of overdose deaths from opioid prescription abuse, meth, heroin, fentanyl, and other illicit drugs. I applaud the President for recognizing the gravity of the situation and officially declaring the Opioid Crisis a Public Health Emergency. With the goal of fighting this crisis and helping West Virginia communities on the front lines, I write to express my strong support for two West Virginia counties' – Nicholas and Fayette – request to be designated a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area in coordination with the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

A HIDTA designation will enable Nicholas and Fayette Counties to stem the tide of illicit drugs that are entering our state from the nearby Interstate Highway System. West Virginia has highest drug overdose death rate in the nation and has reported 1,011 drug overdose deaths in 2017 with 870 – about 86 percent – involving an opioid. This is a 15% increase from 2016. This increase was driven by an increase in fatal overdoses related to fentanyl, which rose from 366 people in 2016 to 591 people in 2017. Behind each of these numbers is a family and a community that is suffering, and with the continued abuse of prescription medication and ready availability of illicit drugs such as heroin and meth this problem will only continue.

It is my hope that the Nicholas and Fayette Counties' request to be designated a HIDTA will be afforded every possible consideration. West Virginia and its communities are making great strides to help the people of West Virginia and Appalachia lead healthier, safer lives, and with your help we will be able to continue this vital work. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of any assistance.

With warmest regards,



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator