

Senate Judiciary Committee

“Community Solutions to Breaking the Cycle of Heroin and Opioid Addiction”

March 17, 2014

Questions for the Record from Ranking Member Charles E. Grassley

Colonel Thomas L’Esperance, Director, Vermont State Police

1. In addition to heroin, what other illegal drugs are being distributed in Vermont? What do you estimate are the quantities of those other drugs being distributed and how do those quantities compare to heroin?

The Vermont Drug Task Force (VDTF) investigates the sale and distribution of all illicit and controlled drugs. The following percentages represent the types of investigations conducted by the VDTF in 2013.

Powder cocaine – 6%

Crack cocaine – 22%

Heroin – 45%

Marijuana – 3%

Methamphetamine - <1%

Prescription drugs (opiate) – 17%

Other – 6%

2. Do you believe that fully legalizing recreational marijuana, as Colorado and Washington states have done, would have a positive effect on Vermont’s efforts to combat the crisis in opioid abuse?

No. Law enforcement in Vermont devotes very little time and resources to existing marijuana laws. Legalizing marijuana could in fact have the opposite effect on law enforcement resources. Instead of freeing up resources, legalization could cause additional unforeseen crimes to increase including, but not limited to; driving under the influence of marijuana, theft and robbery from marijuana dispensaries/stores, and increases in organized crime activity related to the sale of marijuana and the cash business it generates.