

Statement of  
**The Honorable Maria Cantwell**

United States Senator  
Washington  
April 1, 2009

U.S. SENATOR MARIA CANTWELL  
WASHINGTON  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
APRIL 1, 2009  
CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE  
(202) 224-8277

Cantwell: Chief Kerlikowske Demonstrates that in Order to Fight Drugs and Crime, We Must Break Down Walls

Chief Gil Kerlikowske Will Address Prevention, Treatment and Enforcement as Head of ONDCP

WASHINGTON, DC -Today, Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) introduced Seattle Police Chief Gil Kerlikowske during his nomination hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Kerlikowske has been nominated by the Obama Administration to head the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Senator Cantwell's opening statement, as prepared for delivery, is below:

"Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Specter, thank you for holding this important hearing today.

"I'm very pleased to introduce Chief Gil Kerlikowske. And, I urge my colleagues to swiftly confirm him as the next Director of National Drug Control Policy.

"I have known Gil for almost a decade. In his 36 years in law enforcement, he has demonstrated that to fight drugs, we must break down the wall between prevention and treatment, and enforcement.

"One of the reasons he was hired in Seattle, was because of his expertise in community policing.

"He also has a unique ability to understand the long-term implications of what you do today.

"During his time as Deputy Directory of COPS, Gil launched critical programs like the COPS Meth Initiative, the COPS in Schools Program, and the Tribal Resources Grant Program.

"As a member of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HITDA) Executive Board, Gil was a vocal advocate for the resources needed to deal with the meth threat.

"Thanks to the hard work of Gil and his Washington state colleagues Washington State had a sharp decrease in domestic production.

"In 2001, Washington state had more than 1,400 clandestine lab seizures. In 2008, that number plummeted to only 26.

"As Chief of Seattle's Police Department for over 8 years, Gil has also been a leader in transforming the way we combat crime in the 21st Century.

"In 2004, he established a partnership between the Seattle Police Department and INTERPOL to help combat local crime with international ties such as human trafficking and drug smuggling operations.

"He will bring this kind of comprehensive approach to his work combating drug crimes working with federal, state, local and international partners.

"Today, we face an increasingly globalized threat from drug trafficking organizations that's going to take a new, collaborative, comprehensive approach. This is evidently clear by looking at the news stories coming out of Mexico daily.

"According to the U.S. Director of National Intelligence, Mexico is the major conduit for cocaine bound for the United States. And it is the chief foreign supplier of methamphetamine to the U.S. market.

"Criminal networks in Asia and Europe supply Mexican drug cartels with the pseudoephedrine (Sudo-Ephedrine) and other pre-cursor chemicals they need to mass produce meth.

"Even as federal, state, and local law enforcement shut down meth labs across my state and throughout our country, meth and other illegal drugs continue to flow across our borders to be distributed by local street gangs.

Gil knows you need a comprehensive approach and must address BOTH supply AND demand.

"The Obama administration has recognized the need for decisive action. Just last week, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano announced that hundreds of federal agents and high-tech surveillance equipment will be sent to the Southwest to stop the flow of drugs and guns.

"I know Gil will work closely with Secretary Napolitano, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and Attorney General Eric Holder, as well as with local and state governments to meet these challenges head on.

"The U.S. can make a huge difference both at home and abroad. I saw this success firsthand when I visited Colombia in 2007 which has made great progress in fighting drug trafficking organizations with assistance from the United States.

"And, even though Colombia still faces serious challenges, the murder rate in Medellin is lower than Washington, D.C. today.

"Our experience in Colombia has shown it is going to take a comprehensive strategy involving stakeholders at every level, and partnerships around the world, to end the flow of drugs that have such a disastrous impact on our communities.

"I'm confident that Gil will bring the collaborative approach needed to succeed. He is the right man for the job and the cop we need on this beat.

"I very much look forward to working with him.

"Thank you."

###