



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY
Washington, D.C. 20503

Nomination Hearing Opening Statement

Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate

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Statement of:
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Executive Office of the President

Remarks As Prepared for Delivery

OPENING

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Feinstein, and members of the Committee for the opportunity to appear before you as the President's nominee to be the Director of National Drug Control Policy.

I would like to start out by thanking the President for placing his confidence in me, and thanking the hardworking and dedicated staff at ONDCP for welcoming me to the team.

The most important people in my life are my family, and they're a constant source of strength and inspiration for me. I would like to thank my wife, Mary, and my three children – Maggie, Jimmy, and Ian – for being here today.

I'd like to talk about three other children: Archie, Emmett, and Katherine. These young people's lives were cut short because of the opioid crisis.

I've met their parents and I've heard about their bright futures that were extinguished. I've seen that the victims of addiction aren't just the ones we lose – they're also the ones who are left behind.

For every Archie, Emmett, and Katherine, there are so many loved ones who are devastated by their loss.

BODY

The opioid crisis is tearing families apart in every state. No one has been spared – that's why we call this "The Crisis Next Door."

President Trump has made addressing drug demand and the opioid crisis a top priority of his Administration. In March, I was with the President in New Hampshire when he announced his Initiative to Stop Opioid Abuse and Reduce Drug Supply and Demand, which is designed to address the driving forces of the crisis. We intend to:

- Reduce demand through education and preventing over-prescribing;
- Ensure that those struggling with addiction can access the evidence-based treatment and recovery supports they need to rebuild their lives; and
- Cut off the supply of illicit drugs and bring drug traffickers to justice.

I am passionate about turning the tide on this crisis, and I bring professional experience and personal compassion to my work.

Professionally, I began my career as a prosecutor taking drug dealers off the streets, and my experience working at the local, state, and Federal levels, and in management at a Fortune 10 company, gives me a unique perspective in coordinating our country's response to drug threats.

Personally, like so many Americans, I, too, have a family member who has suffered from addiction. I spent time with this relative while they were first in a detox center and then in treatment, and this really personalized the drug epidemic for me. Seeing someone I love struggle with addiction inspired me to do everything I can to make sure more families don't have to watch their loved ones face this same fight.

That's why, since joining ONDCP in February, I've been focused on addressing the problem with a whole-of-government approach:

- For Prevention:
 - We recently launched a national public education media campaign to close the knowledge gap on the dangers of opioids. ONDCP also funds 719 Drug-Free Communities coalitions working to prevent youth drug use across all 50 states, and we recently released 55 additional grants to coalitions authorized under the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016.
- For Treatment and Recovery:
 - I've traveled to treatment centers across the country to see the strain the opioid crisis is putting on families and communities.
 - The Administration has sent nearly one billion dollars to the states for targeting their response. I want to thank the Congress for the incredible commitment to this issue, including meeting the President's request to provide six billion dollars in new funding over two years.
- For Law Enforcement:
 - I've created the first new High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area since 2001 to address the unique drug trafficking challenges facing Alaska. We now have HIDTA presence in all 50 states to help coordinate the Federal, state, local, and tribal response to drug trafficking threats.

- Additionally, I've visited the Southwest border to see the challenges we face with drug smuggling, and I oversaw the development of a fentanyl safety video, in partnership with the National Security Council and Customs and Border Protection, to help keep first responders safe in the field.

Beyond the opioid crisis, we also face a growing threat from cocaine and methamphetamine, as well as challenges related to marijuana and synthetic drugs.

CONCLUSION

I am here today because the President has charged me with making sure overdose deaths go down, access to treatment goes up, and drug traffickers are brought to justice. I believe in a strong ONDCP that uses every ounce of authority you have entrusted to it to effectively coordinate Federal drug policy efforts.

Working together, we can save lives, strengthen our communities, and safeguard our country.

If I have the honor of being confirmed, I vow to be relentless in my work to prevent more Archies, Emmetts, and Katherines from becoming victims of this crisis.

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