



CONGRESSMAN ALAN B. MOLLOHAN, CHAIRMAN

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE & RELATED AGENCIES

For Immediate Release – March 26, 2009

Contact: David Herring 202-225-4172

david.herring@mail.house.gov

Opening Statement of Chairman Alan B. Mollohan
Drug Enforcement Administration

Good morning. I would like to once again welcome Michele Leonhart, Acting Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration, to discuss drug enforcement priorities and strategies, both domestically and abroad.

Because we won't be receiving the detailed President's Budget request until next month, this hearing will be a little different from DEA hearings of previous years. We will have less questioning about line-item changes in your budget and more about your overarching programs and activities. To the extent to which you are able to share details about your budget request, however, we are happy for you to do so.

Our discussion today will range across a wide variety of topics. Of course, we are interested in your major enforcement activities targeting the trafficking of illicit narcotics. We actually began our discussion of enforcement activities two days ago, when a representative of DEA's El Paso Field Division joined other witnesses to discuss the trafficking of narcotics from Mexico into the United States as part of our hearing on cartel-related violence in the border region. We hope to expand on that discussion today to include your programs in other major source and transit countries around the world, including Afghanistan, Bolivia and Colombia.

At the same time, I want to make sure that we pay sufficient attention to the abuse of licit controlled substances. Much of your work in this area is regulatory as opposed to enforcement-oriented, and, as a consequence, it can be overshadowed by DEA's other programs. Its importance, however, is highlighted by discouraging data on prescription drug abuse, which has been increasing across many age categories for the past few years. We are anxious to hear how DEA is continuing to address this problem while still ensuring unimpeded medical access to legal controlled substances.

In just a moment, we will begin with your prepared remarks. Before we do so, however, I would like to turn to our ranking member, Mr. Wolf, for his opening statement.