

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 31, 2025

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Todd Blanche
Deputy Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D.C., 20530

Dear Deputy Attorney General Blanche:

Congratulations on your recent confirmation as our nation's Deputy Attorney General. I write today to urge you to reverse the Biden Department of Justice's misguided decision to cease all consensual encounters conducted as part of the successful Transportation Interdiction Program (TIP). At a time when our nation has endured the pouring of fentanyl and other narcotics into our communities, this critical program led to numerous arrests, millions of dollars of drug proceeds, and the interdiction of thousands of kilos of narcotics.

Following the publication of a Department of Justice Office of Inspector General report, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) announced on January 8, 2025, that it was ordering "the suspension of all consensual encounters [in transit hubs] conducted as part of the [TIP] program pending an evaluation of the utility of such consensual encounters and a broader review of the costs and benefits of the program."¹

This program's success cannot be disputed. Between 2022 and 2024, under this program, DEA agents seized 33 kilograms of fentanyl pills, 16 kilograms of fentanyl powder, 1,547 kilograms of marijuana, and dozens more kilograms of other narcotics at the Nashville International Airport alone. Similarly, at Chicago's Midway International Airport during that same timeframe, DEA agents seized 225 kilograms of cocaine, 9 kilograms of meth, 4 kilograms of heroin, and 2.8 kilos of fentanyl.

While it is entirely unacceptable to ever violate the constitutional rights of passengers or engage in any kind of discrimination, and the DEA should work to address the issues identified in the Department of Justice's OIG report, narcotics interdiction efforts should not be halted altogether. Prohibiting DEA agents and task force officers from conducting these critical interdiction efforts in transit hubs will only allow for higher quantities of fentanyl, methamphetamine, cocaine, and other narcotics to come into our country through our transit hubs and onto our streets. President Trump has already taken significant action to stem the flow of fentanyl and other deadly drugs into our country by securing our southern border and empowering federal, state, and local law enforcement. Allowing for this critical interdiction program to continue at our nation's airports

¹ DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION, MEMORANDUM, TRANSPORTATION INTERDICTION PROGRAM (JANUARY 8, 2025).

and other transit hubs will continue his good work to rid America of the poison of fentanyl and other deadly narcotics. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to reinstate this successful program.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator



Ted Cruz
United States Senator

Enclosures

- cc: The Honorable Derek S. Maltz
Acting Administrator
Drug Enforcement Administration
Springfield, Virginia 22152
- cc: The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20590