

United States Senate

October 3, 2018

Mr. James Carroll
Nominee for Director
Office of National Drug Control Policy
750 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Carroll

Congratulations on your nomination to be the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). If confirmed, you will be the primary advisor to President Trump on drug control policies. At a time when the President has called for a national Public Health Emergency due to the rise in opioid abuse, having a competent, experienced, and knowledgeable leader at the head of ONDCP is a top priority. Montana has been deeply affected by illegal drug use, including the ongoing opioid crisis that is affecting the country. However, in Montana, methamphetamine (meth) is the greatest drug related challenge my state will face. I hope you will accept my invitation to visit Montana, should you be confirmed by the Senate, to see first-hand the damage meth and drugs are having on our families and communities.

U.S. Attorney for Montana Kurt Alme and Attorney General Tim Fox recently identified vital statistics that shed some light on the extent of the problem. In 2013, law enforcement seized 40 pounds of meth in Montana. In 2017, that number more than quadrupled to 188 pounds. Further, in Montana we have seen a 415% increase in meth cases from 2011 to 2017 and a 375% increase in meth related deaths in the same period. Meth is now the leading cause of drug-overdose deaths in Montana. These statistics are chilling and show the devastation meth is having on our communities.


It is essential that Montana officials partner with other state and federal entities to address this crisis. The ONDCP oversees the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program and the COPS ANTI-Methamphetamine program. These two programs are essential resources for Montana law enforcement's effort in combatting meth. I believe that it is important that ONDCP continue to work with local Montana law enforcement, especially on tribal lands, to provide the assistance and dollars they need to continue fighting the meth epidemic.

In the 90's and early 2000's most of meth in Montana was produced domestically in state. Now, according to the DEA, the vast majority of meth in the United States is produced in Mexico and smuggled across the border. Mexican meth tends to be more potent and cheaper and is readily available throughout our state. Although Montana is over 1,000 miles from the Mexican border, cartels are delivering the drugs straight to towns and our tribal communities. It is imperative that ONDCP continue to work with law enforcement on the border to ensure that we stop meth at the source, before it spreads into our homes.

Much of the national attention has focused on the opioid crisis in the United States. Montana, like many states, are suffering from that crisis. However, while we continue to fight opioid abuse, I encourage you not to overlook the severity of methamphetamine use and the statistics that show the meth epidemic is growing across the western United States and the nation. I hope you will make an official visit to Montana to meet with members of law enforcement, tribal leaders, medical providers, as well as the victims who are on the front lines of the meth epidemic.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue and I look forward to working with you and ONDCP to combat drug use in Montana and the United States.

Sincerely,


STEVE DAINES
United States Senator