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U.S. House of Representatives

SELECT COMMITTEE ON
NARCOTICS ABUSE AND CONTROL
ROOM H2-234, HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING ANNEX 2
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

COMMITTEE PHONE 202-226-3040
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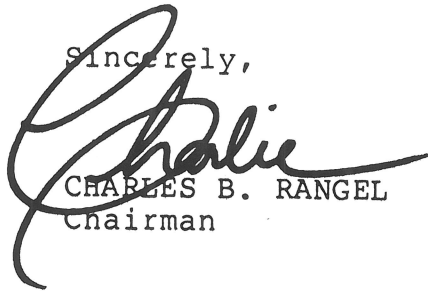
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Dear Colleague:

In light of increasing national awareness of narcotics trafficking and abuse, I am sure that many of you are receiving inquiries concerning the magnitude of the problem, as well as requests to speak on this issue. Because Federal responsibility for narcotics is dispersed among numerous agencies, there is no central agency source from which information on the different components of this problem can be obtained. Therefore, the Select Committee has compiled a fact sheet of vital statistics ranging from production and importation to treatment figures.

Attached please find a copy of the fact sheet. I hope this will facilitate your efforts to address this most pressing national problem.

Sincerely,


CHARLES B. RANGEL
Chairman

THE U.S. NARCOTICS PROBLEM

FACTS AND FIGURES

JULY, 1986

SUPPLY

- * The House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control estimates that 150 tons of cocaine, 12 tons of heroin, between 30 and 60 thousand tons of marijuana, and 200 tons of hashish will enter the United States this year. An additional 4,000 tons of marijuana will be grown and 100 tons of psychotropic drugs will be illicitly manufactured and abused domestically.
- * These figures represent a dramatic increase in the importation of illicit narcotics into this country. For example, in 1984 the Select Committee estimated the influx of cocaine to be 85 tons, as compared to the 1986 estimate of 150 tons.
- * Production of illicit narcotics is escalating to new heights. From 1983 to 1985, coca production in both Peru and Bolivia increased from roughly 55,000 tons to 150,000 tons. In Colombia, estimates of coca production have jumped from 15,000 hectares to 25,000 hectares.
- * Moreover, we are confronted by ever more potent forms of illicit narcotics, which make the problem even more difficult to deal with.
- * "Black Tar" heroin -- a more potent form of heroin -- from Mexico poses a new and deadly threat. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), purity levels have been

File -
Drug info

analyzed as high as 93 percent, with 60 to 70 percent purity most common. The price is low -- 25 cents per milligram as compared to \$2.30 for other types of heroin. It is present in 27 states. Heroin-related hospital emergency admissions have increased in areas where it is found.

* Crack -- a freebase form of cocaine that can be smoked -- is infiltrating our cities and suburbs. We have received reports from researchers in New York that children as young as 8 and 9 years old are being introduced to crack. According to the "800-cocaine hotline," crack is widely available in 17 major cities and 25 states.

DEMAND

* As to the drug using population, it is estimated that there are 25 million people who have tried cocaine, 5 million current cocaine users and as many as 1.2 million addicted to cocaine and needing treatment.

* There are an estimated 550 thousand active heroin addicts.

* In 1985, approximately 7 million people abused psychotropic drugs.

* About 50 million people have tried marijuana and an estimated 25 million may use it regularly.

* According to the 1985 high school senior survey, conducted by the University of Michigan and sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), almost two-thirds of the high school seniors surveyed have used illicit drugs. The reported decline in drug use among high school seniors has stopped.

* In the 1985 survey, 54 percent of the seniors reported using marijuana/hashish, 18 percent inhalants, 12 percent hallucinogens, 8 percent LSD, 26 percent stimulants, 12 percent sedatives, 12 percent tranquilizers, and 92 percent alcohol.

* Most disturbing in the senior survey was that cocaine use had risen to a new high of 17 percent and more than 34 percent of the students did not feel that trying cocaine was dangerous.

* Statistics on college students, from a college survey sponsored by NIDA, indicate that drug use is clearly a problem among college students. The annual use of any illicit drug among college students was 46 percent in 1985. Although marijuana use declined between 1981 and 1984, that decline stopped in 1985 and rose to an annual use level of 41 percent.

* Here again the most disturbing finding was the increase in cocaine use. The annual prevalence of cocaine use by college students has reached 17 percent. Roughly 30 percent of college students will have tried it by the end of their fourth year, and nearly 40 percent of all high school graduates have tried cocaine by the age of 26 or 27.

COSTS

* The economic and social costs of drug trafficking and addiction to this country are high.

* Americans spend an estimated \$120 billion each year on illicit drugs.

* The price of narcotics abuse to the United States amounts to more than \$100 billion annually in increased health care costs, lost productivity, and related crime and violence.

- * The most severe human costs are indicated by drug-related emergency room admissions and deaths. The numbers have increased dramatically in recent years.
- * Deaths and hospital emergencies are at an all time high.
 - 50,973 emergencies
 - 3,212 deaths.
- * Cocaine presents a particularly serious problem today. According to the Drug Abuse Warning Network, DAWN, which gathers statistics from 26 metropolitan areas, between 1981 and 1985, the number of hospital emergencies associated with the use of cocaine increased threefold from 3,296 to 9,946. This trend continues.
- * Between 1981 and 1984, DAWN reports that the number of cocaine related deaths increased almost threefold from 195 to 580. Provisional data for 1985 indicate that the number of cocaine related deaths is continuing to increase to unprecedented high levels with 563 deaths reported to date. These morbidity figures do not include New York City.
- * New York reports an increase in cocaine related deaths from 7 to 137 between 1983 and 1985.
- * Although NIDA no longer collects data on clients in drug treatment, NIDA is able to report, on the basis of data voluntarily submitted to the agency, that the percentage of clients admitted to treatment for cocaine problems in 19 states and District of Columbia increased from 3.8 percent in 1979 to 9.7 in 1983.
- * A May 1986 report on State sources and services related to alcohol and drug abuse problems, prepared by the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors, indicated that the number of treatment admissions for cocaine use had increased from 26,653 in FY 1984 to 39,592 in FY 1985, an increase of 48.5 percent.

FEDERAL RESPONSE

- * Of the tons of narcotics flooding the country, we intercept only 5 - 15 percent.
- * State and local enforcement efforts are being overwhelmed by the problem. In hearings, we have heard from officials across the country that their drug enforcement efforts need Federal assistance to combat the widespread drug trafficking in their jurisdictions.
- * Federal support for drug abuse services has been cut by more than 40 percent since 1980, under the block grant program.
- * Waiting lists for treatment are common in our major cities. Witnesses have told the Select Committee that treatment resources have been severely impacted by Federal cuts in funding. The States and localities cannot do the job alone.
- * The Department of Education spends \$3 million of a \$17-\$18 million budget on drug education. We have no Federal drug education program to help our schools repel drug use by our students, which the survey data clearly indicate is rampant.