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May 19, 2009

Statement of Rep. Jim Jordan
Ranking Republican Member
Subcommittee on Domestic Policy

“ONDCP’s Fiscal Year 2010 National Drug Control Budget and the Priorities, Objectives, and Policies of the Office of National Drug Control Policy under the New Administration.”

Thank you, Chairman Kucinich, for holding this hearing on the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). I also want to thank the witnesses for taking time out of their busy schedules to testify before the Subcommittee.

The new Administration has signaled significant shifting of our Nation’s drug policy. Rather than changing the laws on the books, in my view, we need robust interdiction, diligent prevention, strong law enforcement, and effective treatment.

I am troubled by Attorney General Holder’s announcement that the federal government will no longer raid medical-marijuana facilities in California. Marijuana is the drug most readily available to our youth. Reports indicate that almost any adult who enters a medical-marijuana facility and complains of a headache can leave with marijuana and turn around and distribute the drug to any willing takers, including minors. Eighteen year old high school students can get prescriptions for marijuana and have them filled at the dispensaries. It is my hope that the Administration listens to the science, follows the law, and uses common sense in enforcing regulations of these facilities.

It also concerns me to read articles like the one in the *Wall Street Journal* where newly confirmed Director Kerlikowske called for an end to the “War on Drugs.” In communities across my district, I have seen the devastating effects that drugs like heroin

and methamphetamines have had on families, and the crime that results from drug abuse. Without proper enforcement and strengthening of existing laws, these tragedies will continue to occur. To suggest that the government should turn its back on this issue is a failure to recognize the gravity of the situation or the right course of action.

I am also troubled by President Obama's stance on needle exchange that he articulated during the campaign. It is no less concerning to hear the new ONDCP Director voice his support for needle-exchange programs. However, I have noticed that in the budget advanced last week, there were no funds for needle-exchange. I look forward to hearing Director Kerlikowske explain the Administration's plan for such a program.

While no doubt well-intentioned, needle exchange programs do nothing but perpetuate deadly lifestyles and encourage further drug abuse. According to the Drug Free America Foundation, needle-exchange program users are given clean needles but are not required to turn in dirty needles, and rarely do the personnel of these centers refer users for rehabilitative treatment. Studies of needle-exchange programs in Vancouver, British Columbia, did not show reductions in rates of HIV, hepatitis C and other infections like MRSA. In fact, the opposite occurred -- rates of infection actually rose.

To conclude, The "War on Drugs" will not succeed unless we seek to destroy the drugs where they grow, stop the drugs at the border, and arrest those who deal or distribute drugs. We commend all our law enforcement officers at the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Border Patrol, and the Coast Guard. They play a vital role in these efforts. On the prevention and treatment front, we need to encourage families, churches, schools, and communities to educate our citizens about the dangers of drug use

Director Kerlikowske, I hope you will have the courage to pull the plug on programs that are not giving the taxpayers a return on their investment. I look forward to hearing from all of our witnesses on efforts we can take to stop drug abuse, prevent drug crime, and make sure that families and communities have the tools they need to stay drug free.

Thank you all for coming.