



For Immediate Release

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Contact: Shannon Gravitte, (202) 225-2176

## McCollum and DeWine Detail Plan to Reduce the Flow of Drugs Into the U.S. by 80% *Legislation Would Allocate \$23 Billion Over 3 Years for Drug War*

**Washington, DC** — The lesson of the past decade is simple," U.S. Representative Bill McCollum (R-FL), said today as he introduced the Western Hemisphere Drug Elimination Act of 1998. "Prevent drugs from entering into the country, and you drive up the price of drugs. Drive up the price of drugs and you save lives."

Representative McCollum, Chairman of the House Crime Subcommittee, was joined by U.S. Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH), who is spearheading the Senate effort, in announcing the legislation which authorizes \$2.3 billion over three years for the equipment, personnel and training necessary to reach the goal of reducing the flow of drugs into the U.S. by 80 percent. The Administration's current budget has set a goal of reducing the flow by 50 percent in 10 years.

"Prevention, education and treatment are all critical elements of a successful anti-narcotics program," McCollum said. "But when the streets of our nation are flooded with cocaine and heroin that is cheaper and more plentiful than ever before, no one should expect demand-side efforts to succeed."

All of the cocaine entering the U.S. originates in Colombia, Peru and Bolivia, and most of the heroin is produced in Colombia. Interdiction efforts that are now at half the level of the early 1990s have played a key role in producing some alarming results — most horrifying is the doubling of teen drug use since 1992. Law enforcement officials agree that the most effective counter-narcotics strategy is to stop them at their source. Highlights of the resources authorized in the bill include:

- ▶ **\$502 million** for acquisition, operations and maintenance of ten P-3B airborne early warning aircraft by the U.S. Customs Air Wing;
- ▶ **\$300 million** for the establishment of an airbase to support U.S. counter-narcotics operations in southern Caribbean, northern South America and the eastern Pacific (replace Howard Air Force Base in Panama);
- ▶ **\$289 million** for construction of six US. Coast Guard Medium Endurance Cutters;
- ▶ **\$72 million** for purchase of 6 UH-60L Black Hawk helicopters for the Colombian National Police; and
- ▶ **\$13 million** for International Law Enforcement Academies in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

"This bill focuses on the one area of the drug war in which the federal government has a unique responsibility to make a difference," McCollum said. "We simply must shut down the pipeline of drugs pouring into own country — the lives of too many young people are at stake."

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