

United States Senate

SENATE CAUCUS ON
INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL
HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 818-C
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 18, 2018

The Honorable Iván Duque
President-elect of the Republic of Colombia
Casa de Nariño
Bogotá, D.C., Colombia

Dear President-elect Duque,

We write today to congratulate you on your recent presidential election. We also wish to express our interest in working with your Administration to strengthen our bilateral cooperation to better address the coca cultivation, cocaine export and use, and the related violence that impacts both of our countries.

The Colombian government is a strong counternarcotics partner to the United States, and seized a record 416 metric tons of cocaine in 2017. Despite this, however, more than 90 percent of cocaine found in the United States originates from Colombia. Between 2014 and 2017, there was an 87 percent increase in coca cultivation and a 184 percent increase in potential pure cocaine production.

During this same time frame, potential export-quality cocaine production increased by 160 percent to 1100 metric tons, and documented cocaine departing Colombia destined for the United States increased to 78 percent.

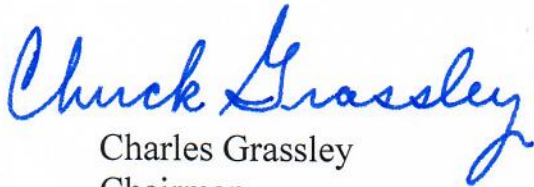
These increases in cultivation coincide with an increased demand for cocaine in the United States. In 2016, the most recent year for which data is available, there was a ten percent increase in the number of new cocaine initiates ages 18-25 in the United States, and there was a 52 percent increase in the number of cocaine overdose deaths compared to 2015.

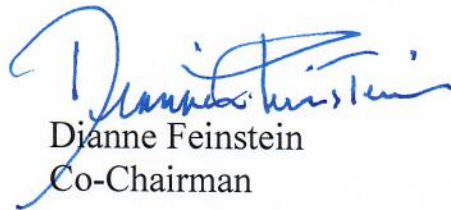
These facts clearly demonstrate that the United States must increase its efforts to reduce the demand for cocaine and other illicit drugs through effective prevention and treatment programs.

At the same time, we must also strengthen our partnership and policies with your government to reduce the supply – particularly those focused on eradication and interdiction, with the ultimate goal of dismantling criminal organizations and their financial structures.

As such, we look forward to working with you as your Administration begins to evaluate Colombia's counternarcotics strategy in the coming months.

Sincerely,


Charles Grassley
Chairman


Dianne Feinstein
Co-Chairman

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