



BILL LEE
Governor

TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

901 R.S. Gass Boulevard
Nashville, Tennessee 37216-2639
(615) 744-4000
Facsimile (615) 744-4500
TDD (615) 744-4001



DAVID B. RAUSCH
Director

To: United States Sentencing Commission

From: Mark Delaney- Special Agent in Charge- Tennessee Bureau of Investigation

Re: Written Testimony to be provided August 5, 2025

Date: July 25, 2025

Introduction

Good morning and thank you for the invitation to testify before you today. My name is Mark Delaney, and I am the Special Agent in Charge for the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation's Tennessee Dangerous Drugs Task Force. On behalf of Tennessee Bureau of Investigation Director David Rausch, over 375 law enforcement agencies, and over 7.2 million residents of the Volunteer State, I wish to update you on the status of Methamphetamine distribution, production and purity levels in our state.

By way of introduction, I have been in the law enforcement profession now for a total of 26 years. During this time, I have had the opportunity to be directly and indirectly involved in the investigation of Clandestine Drug Laboratories, Drug Trafficking Organizations, and criminal enterprises at the local, state, and federal levels. I currently oversee the Tennessee Dangerous Drugs Task Force which started in 1999 to confront the methamphetamine epidemic plaguing counties in East Tennessee, the Methamphetamine Task Force began in 1999 as a small group of law enforcement agencies working together. Today it is known as the Tennessee Dangerous Drugs Task Force (TDDTF) and has grown to an organization that encompasses all 95 counties in the State of Tennessee. All local law enforcement agencies are members of the task force, as well as the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and all three of the United States Attorney's Offices in Tennessee.



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Agency Mission

The mission of the TDDTF, by way of TBI, is to reduce the availability and illegal use of harmful scheduled drugs, including methamphetamine, marijuana, prescription drug diversion, heroin, cocaine, fentanyl, and others by educating the public about the dangers of all scheduled drugs; by increasing public safety through supplying equipment, training, intelligence, and investigative tools to assist law enforcement and prosecutorial authorities in strategically identifying, targeting and prosecuting drug offenders; by networking with law enforcement agencies, regulatory agencies, health providers, treatment providers and local drug coalitions; and by protecting the public and the drug endangered children of Tennessee from harmful effects of manufacturing distribution and illegal use of scheduled drugs.

The TBI through the TDDTF provides training, equipment, hazardous material response vehicles, pill take back collection, and adjudicated drug waste incineration for law enforcement. Our task force also employs the state of Tennessee's Handle with Care (HWC) Program Coordinator and the Tennessee Alliance Drug Endangered Children (TADEC) Coordinator, who are tasked to promote school-community partnerships aimed at ensuring that children who are exposed to trauma in their home, school or community receive appropriate interventions to help them achieve academically at their highest levels despite whatever traumatic circumstances they may have endured. The goal of HWC is to help students succeed in school.

Trends

Tennessee has often been referred to as the "Methamphetamine Capitol of Appalachia". This is not a title that law abiding citizens of Tennessee are proud to claim and numerous efforts, including: education, prevention, and enforcement, are ongoing to attempt to minimize the effects of methamphetamine distribution and consumption in Tennessee.

Recent trends continue to demonstrate a significant reduction in the detection of domestic clandestine methamphetamine laboratories in Tennessee. This reduction is believed to be due to state and federal laws that have limited the availability of pre-cursor ingredients needed to produce methamphetamine.



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Additionally, the readily available supply of highly potent and pure methamphetamine imported from source countries through our borders and into the United States has contributed to the decrease of domestically produced methamphetamine. Drug Cartels continue to develop new techniques and business models to ensure the successful importation of methamphetamine into the United States and ultimately into the hands of methamphetamine consumers across the country including the State of Tennessee.

Purity Levels

It is not uncommon for Tennessee law enforcement to discover purity levels of imported Methamphetamine exceeding 90 plus percent. It has been my historical experience that the purer levels of Methamphetamine discovered directly correlates with the proximity of the source in the supply chain. However, this trend continues to evolve and is ever changing. It is now not uncommon to discover a lower-level drug trafficker distributing Methamphetamine that is very pure. Plainly stated, source countries and drug cartels have such large quantities of methamphetamine on hand that there is no need to cut or add other types of substances to the methamphetamine before it is positioned into the distribution pipeline. Unfortunately, the same is now true for the purity of methamphetamine distributed by lower-level drug traffickers. Based on conversations with prosecuting United States Attorney's, Tennessee District Attorney Generals, TBI Special Agents, DEA Special Agents and Task Force Officers in Tennessee, they continue to seize Methamphetamine with alarming levels of purity in the 90 plus percent purity level. It continues to be common practice and now expected for cases prosecuted in Tennessee federal courts to see an alarmingly high purity level of methamphetamine.

Community Impact

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation Drug Investigation Division attempts to prioritize active drug investigations based off predicted impacts that can be identified and minimized through the utilization of traditional and non-traditional investigative techniques. Unlike Fentanyl which can cause sudden death to the consumer, Methamphetamine usage typically continues for a longer duration causing an extended period of harm to communities. For example, an extremely rural area of Tennessee may be saturated with high purity methamphetamine which will, over a period, devastate the consumer, their family, and their





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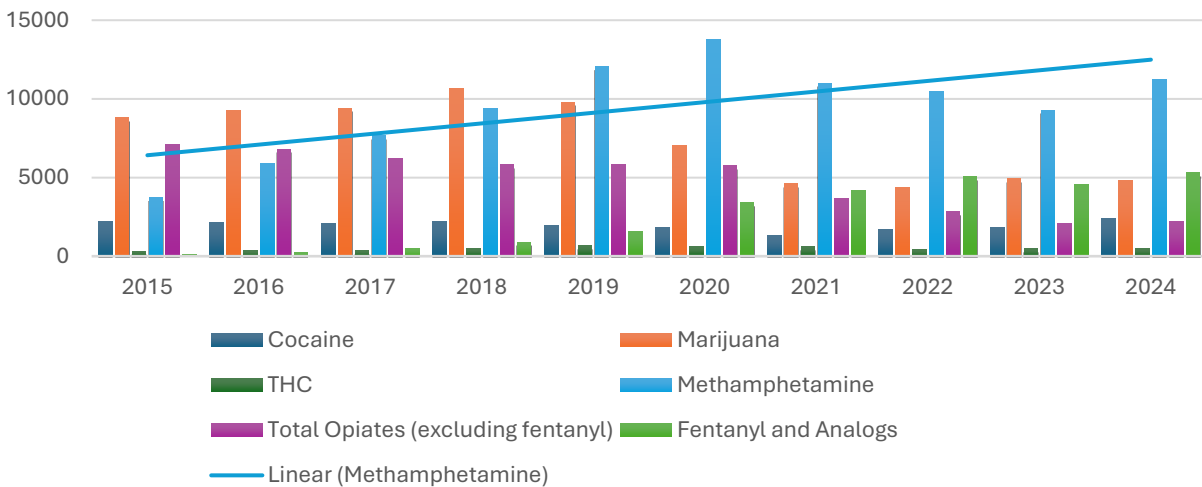
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community either directly or indirectly. Our agency attempts to target the distributor of methamphetamine into these smaller communities as these are often the areas hardest hit and require more resources to effectively dismantle the drug trafficking organizations.

Tennessee Bureau of Investigation Crime Laboratory Statics- Analysis Completed

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Cocaine	2236	2135	2099	2221	1978	1828	1289	1686	1838	2387
Marijuana	8798	9241	9414	10652	9795	7051	4592	4354	4914	4800
THC	318	340	364	497	680	594	615	417	492	472
Methamphetamine	3748	5920	7646	9405	12072	13774	11001	10490	9272	11214
Total Opiates (excluding fentanyl)	7086	6809	6210	5815	5858	5755	3693	2828	2096	2218
Fentanyl and Analogues	106	210	488	888	1550	3404	4185	5064	4535	5329

TBI Crime Lab Submissions, 2015-2024



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Considerations

Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO'S) are very savvy and understand their trade and the potential risks or penalties associated with their enterprise. I submit that based on the trends and patterns referenced above, that law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges at the state and federal level need every available tool and resource available to detect, prosecute, and sentence those found to be distributing Methamphetamine into our communities. While more individuals, not just those at the top of the business enterprise, are arrested and charged with a purer form of methamphetamine, I would submit that should not equate to a lesser sentence because the dangerousness and prevalence of methamphetamine in our communities continues to increase. If DTO's detect any level of leniency or potential lesser penalty, it is my belief that DTO's will unequivocally change their distribution strategies and business models to receive any potential benefit of the adaptation of their business models.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to relay specific facts and information applicable to the State of Tennessee. I welcome the opportunity to answer questions as needed.

