

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-19-27](#), a report to congressional committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

Since 1989, DOD has received billions of dollars to fund the National Guard's participation in a counterdrug program focused on domestic drug interdiction activities. DOD received \$261 million for this program in fiscal year 2018. This program provides military support to assist state, local, and tribal law enforcement organizations with counterdrug activities and operates in 54 states and territories across the United States.

Senate Report 115-125 included a provision for GAO to evaluate the National Guard counterdrug program. This report (1) evaluates the extent to which DOD has strategy and implementing guidance for the National Guard counterdrug program, and (2) assesses DOD's processes to approve states' counterdrug plans and distribute funding to the program, among other things. GAO reviewed DOD's counterdrug strategy and guidance; DOD funding and personnel data; and its processes to distribute funding.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO is making a total of five recommendations, including, among others, that DOD issue a strategic framework that addresses current drug threats, the National Guard issue guidance with detailed procedures on how states should administer the program, DOD assess the revised process for approving state plans, and the National Guard incorporate DOD's strategic counternarcotics priorities into its funding distribution process. DOD concurred with GAO's recommendations.

View [GAO-19-27](#). For more information, contact Elizabeth Field at (202) 512-2775 or [FieldE1@gao.gov](mailto:FieldE1@gao.gov).

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## DRUG CONTROL

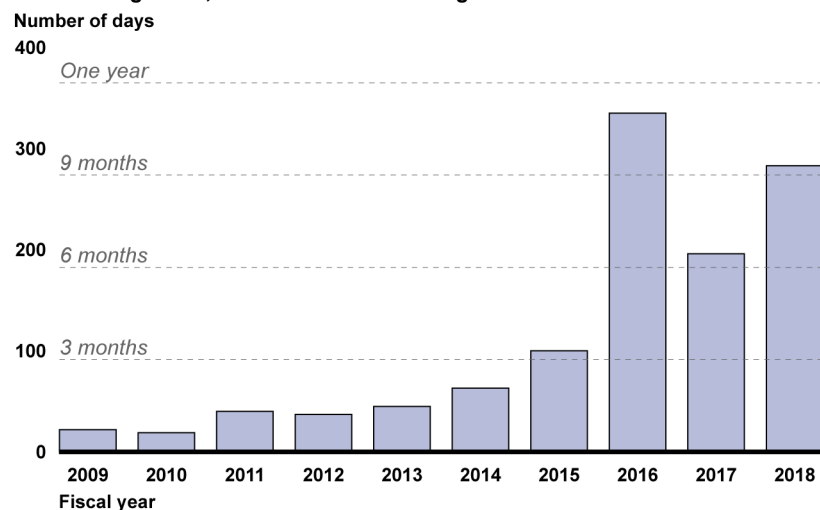
### DOD Should Improve Its Oversight of the National Guard Counterdrug Program

#### What GAO Found

The Department of Defense (DOD) lacks current strategy and guidance to implement the National Guard counterdrug program. Although a number of key national-level strategies, such as the National Drug Control Strategy, have been updated since 2011 to address changing drug threats, GAO found that DOD's 2011 Counternarcotics and Global Threats Strategy has not been updated to reflect these changes. In addition, the National Guard lacks detailed procedures and processes for the states to implement the National Guard counterdrug program, such as how to conduct cross-state aerial reconnaissance. Without current strategy or guidance, it will be difficult for the National Guard to operate its counterdrug program effectively.

DOD's processes to approve state counterdrug plans and distribute funding to the state-level counterdrug programs could be improved. Since at least 2009, DOD has provided funding to the states without first approving state plans for counterdrug activities, as required by statute. GAO found that the delay in approval of state counterdrug plans has worsened since fiscal year 2009; in fiscal year 2018, approval took over 9 months (283 days); see figure below. In 2018, DOD took some steps to address the timely review of state plans, but GAO found that those steps did not rectify the problem.

**Number of Days Between the Beginning of the Fiscal Year and when DOD Approved All State Counterdrug Plans, Fiscal Years 2009 through 2018**



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense data. | [GAO-19-27](#)

GAO also found that the process used by the National Guard to distribute funding to the states within the program does not incorporate DOD's strategic counternarcotics priorities, such as the U.S. southwest and northern border areas. GAO's work on results-oriented management states that strategy should inform program activities and resourcing. Until National Guard's process to distribute funding to state counterdrug programs is improved, it risks directing funding toward lower priority counterdrug activities at the expense of higher priority activities.