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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

February 17, 2016

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The Honorable Loretta E. Lynch
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Lynch:

Just this past week, it was announced that New Hampshire reached 414 fatal drug overdoses in 2015. This is more than double the deaths from just two years before, and with 22 cases still pending, the numbers may rise even higher. While the drug epidemic has been especially bad in New Hampshire, the heroin crisis is affecting communities around the country. President Obama highlighted this challenge in his State of the Union address, and in his budget proposal for \$1.1 billion in new funding to address substance use disorder. As a co-chair of the Bipartisan Task Force to Combat the Heroin Epidemic, I have been working with my colleagues to find ways to combat this challenge.

Given the national concern about this crisis and how it has been highlighted by local, state, and federal officials, I became very concerned when I learned that asset forfeiture payments to law enforcement and counter-narcotic units in New Hampshire were being suspended. This crisis requires a comprehensive solution, and these payments that supplement efforts of law enforcement to disrupt traffickers are a vital part of that effort.

While Asset Forfeiture Fund payments are suspended, it is important that we find other ways to support state and local efforts to combat drug traffickers. Therefore, I am requesting your office's assistance in identifying grant programs that local law enforcement agencies can apply for in order to assist in funding their efforts to combat criminals trafficking heroin and fentanyl into our communities.

Additionally, as money from the Asset Forfeiture Fund becomes available, I ask that you prioritize payments towards those local law enforcement agencies that use the funds to support their narcotic and counter-drug units.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,

Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress