

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 14, 2018

Hon Rodney Frelinghuysen, Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Nita Lowey, Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey:

As Members of Congress focused on a comprehensive response to our nation's opioid crisis, we write to urge you to provide expanded funding in the final Fiscal Year 2018 omnibus appropriations act and in the Fiscal Year 2019 Labor- Health and Human Services appropriations act to the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA). While both the House and Senate FY 2018 appropriations bills provide funding for CARA programs, there are some differences in these funding levels. Also, additional funding to combat the opioid epidemic was agreed to by both chambers of Congress under the February 7th Balanced Budget Agreement. As such, we urge you to reconcile these differences by adopting the highest funding level in each of these CARA accounts for both Fiscal Year 2018 and Fiscal Year 2019.

As you know, the opioid epidemic is having a devastating impact on public health and safety across the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control's most recent statistics, drug overdoses now surpass automobile accidents as the leading cause of injury-related death for Americans aged 25 to 64. More than 174 Americans die as a result of overdose every day. While addiction is a treatable disease, only about ten percent of those who need treatment receive it, and we are witnessing the devastating impact of this situation in communities across our nation.

We know from researchers, the law enforcement community, and treatment providers that the most effective way to address the challenges posed by addiction is to initiate a comprehensive response to the twin epidemics of opioid and heroin addiction. Designed to respond to both today's crisis and tomorrow's threats, CARA represents a comprehensive response to substance use disorders that includes preventive measures, support for law enforcement strategies, resources to address overdoses, expansion of evidence-based treatment and support for those in or seeking recovery.

Among other provisions, CARA expands:

- Prevention and educational efforts – particularly aimed at teens, parents and other caretakers, and ageing populations – to prevent the abuse of opioids and heroin.
- The availability of naloxone to law enforcement agencies and other first responders.
- Treatment resources to promptly identify and treat individuals suffering from addiction disorders in the criminal justice system.
- Disposal sites for unwanted prescription medications to keep them out of the hands of our children and adolescents.

- Evidence-based addiction treatment and intervention programs to expand best practices throughout the country.
- Medication assisted treatment demonstrations across the country.
- Veterans Treatment Courts to expand evidence-based treatment and peer-to-peer services.

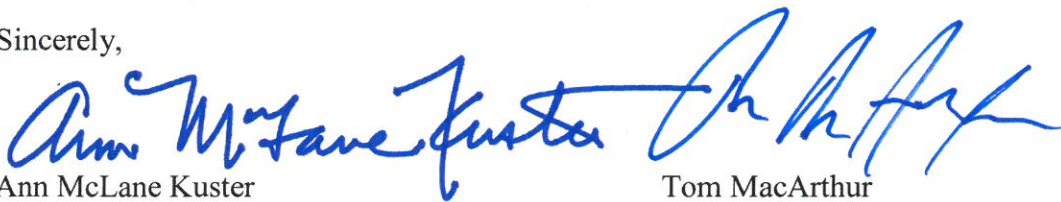
As you finalize your work on the rest of the Fiscal Year 2018 omnibus appropriations and the Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations act, we note the additional \$6 billion in Fiscal Years 2018 & 2019 funding promised to combat the opioid epidemic as part Balanced Budget Agreement. We strongly urge you fully fund CARA at its authorized levels and consider devoting a substantial portion of the funds promised by the Balanced Budget Agreement as supplemental funding for all the grant programs authorized by CARA.


While CARA represents an important step toward a comprehensive framework to help individuals with substance use disorder, the perilous costs to our communities and economies demands greater action. In 2016, over 63,000 people died due to drug overdose. The White House Council of Economic Advisers reported that the nation suffered an estimated \$504 billion economic cost due to the opioid and heroin epidemic. It is clear more must be done. We are appreciative that House Appropriators have acknowledged this need with the Budget Agreement.

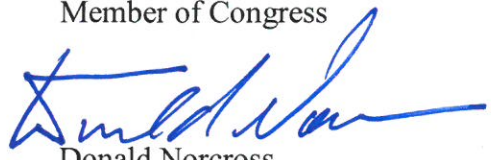
We know you will continue to take action against this epidemic in our midst and provide the funding necessary to support the comprehensive response framework provided in CARA. Doing so would provide the resources and incentives necessary for states and local governments to expand treatment, prevention and recovery efforts for the millions of Americans who are affected by this deadly disease.


We appreciate your leadership and continued support in helping us address the opioid crisis through CARA funding in the Fiscal Years 2018 & 2019 appropriations acts. Only through a comprehensive approach that leverages evidence-based law enforcement and health care services can we stop and reverse the current trend. Thank you for your consideration of our important funding request.


Sincerely,

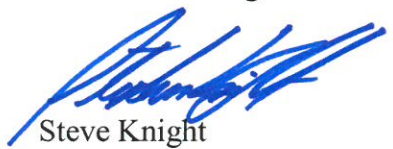

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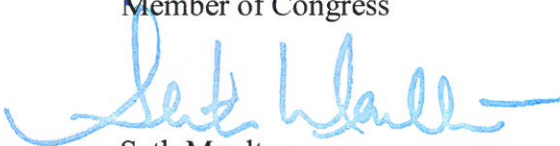
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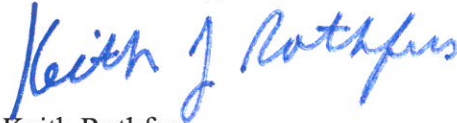
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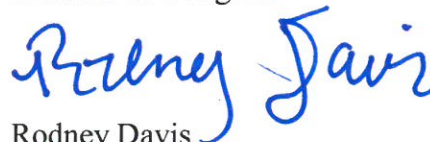
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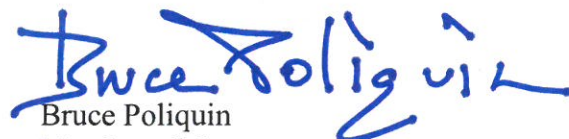
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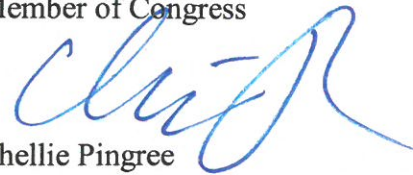
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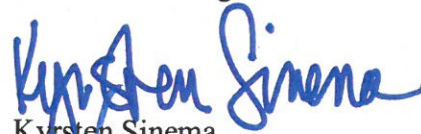
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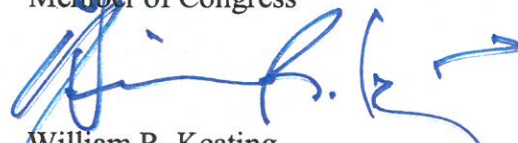
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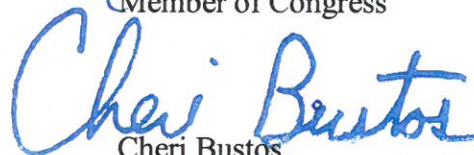
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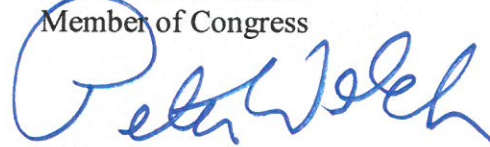
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Cheri Bustos
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Lisa Blunt Rochester
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Peter Welch
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CC:

Hon. John Culberson, Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

Hon. Tom Cole, Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Hon. Tom Graves, Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government

Hon. José Serrano, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

Hon. Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Hon. Mike Quigley, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government