

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2016

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey:

As you know, heroin use and prescription opioid abuse are having devastating effects on public health and safety in communities across our country. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), drug overdoses now surpass automobile accidents as the leading cause of injury-related death for Americans ages 25 to 64. Every day, more than 129 Americans die as a result of drug overdose – and over half of these drug overdoses are related to prescription drug use. Though research conducted at the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) and other organizations show addiction to be a treatable disease of the brain, only about ten percent of those who need treatment actually receive it.

In light of the growing challenges posed by the opioid epidemic across the country, we write to express our strong support for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 funding of programs that would support the comprehensive and integrated strategies for addressing opioid abuse. We must act this year to ensure that our law enforcement officials, care givers, mental health experts, and others have the resources necessary to address this crisis in a comprehensive way.

A critical element in addressing this crisis is funding for vital provisions included in the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2015 (H.R.953/S.524). This bipartisan legislation was developed over the past two and a half years through a cooperative process involving key national stakeholders in the public health, law enforcement, criminal justice, and drug policy fields, and is designed to fight prescription opioid abuse and heroin use holistically – from expanding prevention to supporting recovery.

Among other objectives, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) would:

- Expand prevention and educational efforts-particularly aimed at teens, parents and other caretakers, and aging populations-to prevent prescription opioid abuse and the use of heroin.
- Expand the availability of the overdose reversal drug naloxone to law enforcement agencies and other first responders.
- Expand resources to promptly identify and treat individuals suffering from substance use disorders in the criminal justice system.
- Expand disposal sites for unwanted prescription medications to keep them out of the hands of children and adolescents.

- Launch an evidence-based prescription opioid and heroin treatment and intervention program to expand best practices throughout the country.
- Launch a medication assisted treatment and intervention demonstration program.
- Strengthen prescription drug monitoring programs to help states monitor and track prescription drug diversion and to help at-risk individuals access services.

In addition to the provisions in CARA, we ask that you provide robust funding to several other areas that will aid in prevention, treatment, and recovery. These include High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas, drug free community grants, drug court grants, alternative treatment grants, and the National Health Service Corps.

We must 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 substance use disorders.

Only through a comprehensive approach that leverages evidence-based law enforcement initiatives, treatment, and support for recovery can we reverse the devastating impact this crisis is having in our communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

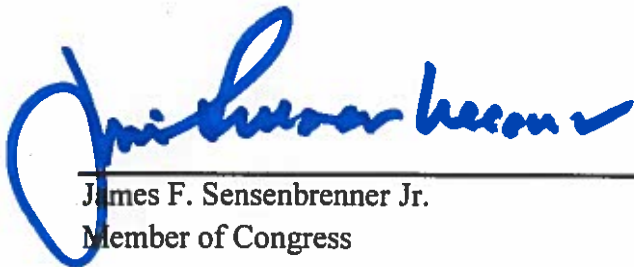
Sincerely,



Frank C. Guinta
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



James F. Sensenbrenner Jr.
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Paul Tonko
Member of Congress



Lamar Smith
Member of Congress



Jared Polis
Member of Congress



Lee Zeldin
Member of Congress



Steve Chabot
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



Leonard Lance
Member of Congress



Brian Higgins
Member of Congress



Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress



Patrick Meehan
Member of Congress



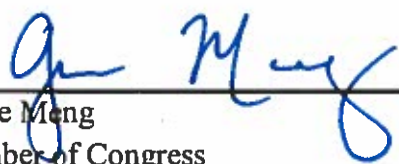
Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress



Katherine M. Clark
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Robert J. Dold
Member of Congress




Sean Duffy
Member of Congress



Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress



Sander Levin
Member of Congress



Richard L. Hanna
Member of Congress



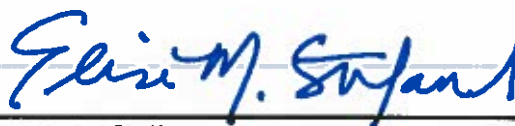
John Katko
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Elijah Cummings
Member of Congress



Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress



Peter T. King
Member of Congress



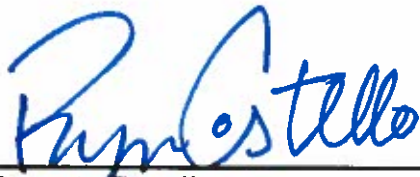
Barbara Comstock
Member of Congress



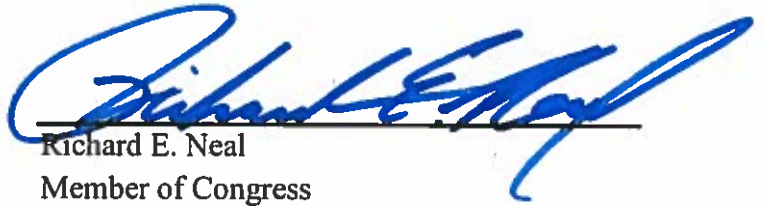
Doug Collins
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Ryan A. Costello
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



Stephen Knight
Member of Congress



James A. Himes
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell Jr.
Member of Congress



Michael G. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



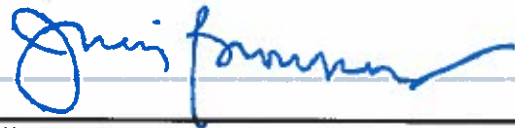
Steve Stivers
Member of Congress



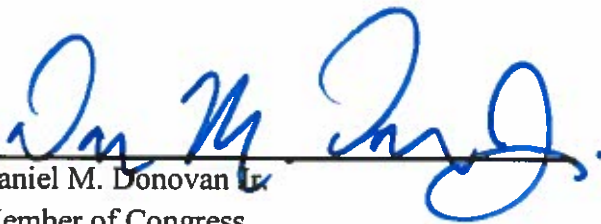
Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Bruce Poliquin
Member of Congress



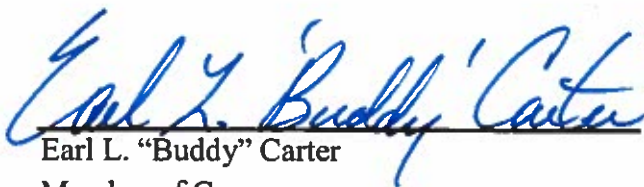
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



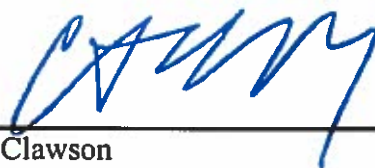
Daniel M. Donovan Jr.
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress



Curt Clawson
Member of Congress



Christopher P. Gibson
Member of Congress



Ron Kind
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



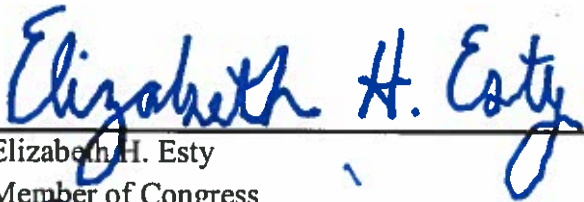
Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



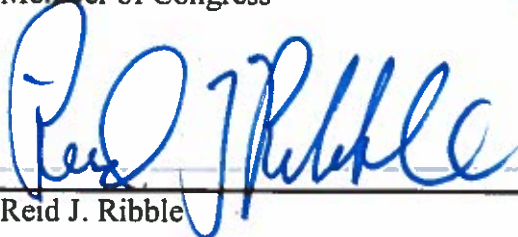
Robert L. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Elizabeth H. Esty
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Reid J. Ribble
Member of Congress



Mike Kelly
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress



Ami Bera
Member of Congress



J. Randy Forbes
Member of Congress