

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 4, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan:

As leaders from states and districts hit hard by the opioid and heroin public health crisis that has killed tens of thousands of Americans over the past few years, we applaud your announcement that the House will consider legislation on this topic over the next few weeks. The urgency of this matter is clear. According to a study released earlier this year by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more people died of drug overdoses in 2014 than any year before, putting the drug overdose mortality number to over 47,055. Citing the same study, sixty one percent of those deaths – 28,647 people – died in opioid-related overdoses.

Last month, the Senate passed the *Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016* (S.524/HR 953), by an overwhelmingly bipartisan margin. Now, this legislation awaits consideration by the House. Among other things, CARA expands education and prevention, increases access to the life-saving drug naloxone through law enforcement and first responders, adds disposal sites, improves access to treatment and intervention, and strengthens prescription drug monitoring programs. House-drafted provisions similar to the Senate-passed CARA provisions, along with many other bipartisan proposals that have been offered, deserve action in the House without delay.

However, this type of House package is only one piece of a comprehensive approach to this crisis that must also include boosting resources in the near term to help communities and families struggling with the impacts of addiction. One of the most urgent requests we have heard from law enforcement officers, public health officials, and community leaders is for funding to address this growing epidemic. We must treat this problem like the emergency that it is, and give those responding to the crisis the tools, support and resources they need right now. To this end, we hope that the House will be allowed to consider an emergency supplemental appropriations measure, supported by House Democratic Leadership, that will provide \$600 million immediately toward the opioid crisis as an urgent, first-step investment, while recognizing that more will be needed moving forward.

Addiction does not differentiate between race, gender, wealthy or poor, urban or rural, red or blue. We urge you to lead your caucus to do the right thing by addressing this crisis as we would any other public health emergency. We cannot afford to play politics with this epidemic. We must take immediate steps to quell this crisis now through authorizations *and* emergency appropriations.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,


JOE COURTNEY

Member of Congress



ALMA S. ADAMS

Member of Congress



EARL BLUMENAUER

Member of Congress



KATHY CASTOR

Member of Congress



KATHERINE M. CLARK

Member of Congress



STEVE COHEN

Member of Congress



SUSAN A. DAVIS

Member of Congress



ROSA L. DELAURO

Member of Congress



TAMMY DUCKWORTH

Member of Congress



ANN McLANE KUSTER

Member of Congress



DONALD S. BEYER, Jr

Member of Congress



SUZANNE BONAMICI

Member of Congress



DAVID N. CICILLINE

Member of Congress



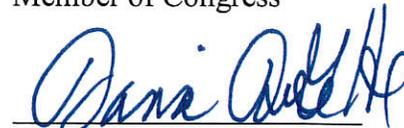
YVETTE D. CLARKE

Member of Congress



JOHN CONYERS, Jr.

Member of Congress



DIANA DEGETTE

Member of Congress



MARK DESAULNIER

Member of Congress



ELIZABETH H. ESTY

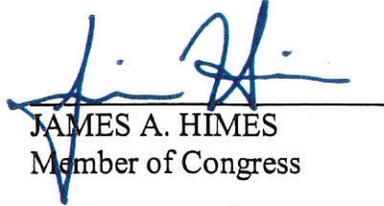
Member of Congress



LOIS FRANKEL
Member of Congress



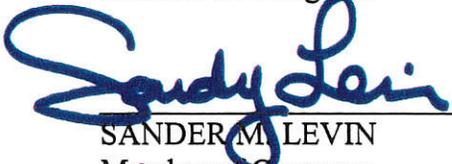
ALAN GRAYSON
Member of Congress



JAMES A. HIMES
Member of Congress



JAMES R. LANGEVIN
Member of Congress



SANDER M. LEVIN
Member of Congress



DAVID LOEBSACK
Member of Congress



JOHN P. SARBANES
Member of Congress



JAMES P. MCGOVERN
Member of Congress



SETH MOULTON
Member of Congress



JOHN GARAMENDI
Member of Congress



ALCEE L. HASTINGS
Member of Congress



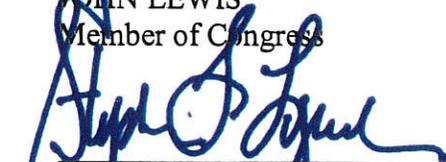
WILLIAM R. KEATING
Member of Congress



JOHN B. LARSON
Member of Congress



JOHN LEWIS
Member of Congress



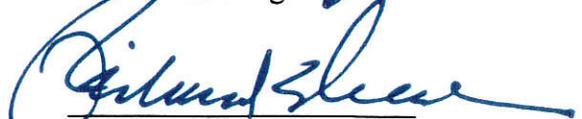
STEPHEN F. LYNCH
Member of Congress



DORIS O. MATSUI
Member of Congress



JERRY MCNERNEY
Member of Congress



RICHARD E. NEAL
Member of Congress



DONALD NORCROSS
Member of Congress



ED PERLMUTTER
Member of Congress



MARK POCAN
Member of Congress



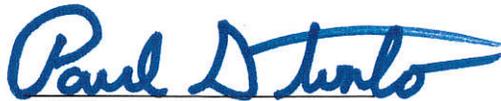
TIM RYAN
Member of Congress



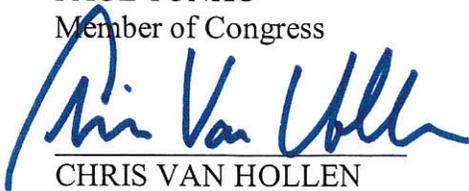
JAN SCHAKOWSKY
Member of Congress



LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER
Member of Congress



PAUL TONKO
Member of Congress



CHRIS VAN HOLLEN
Member of Congress



JOHN A. YARMUTH
Member of Congress



FRANK PALLONE, Jr.
Member of Congress



CHELLIE PINGREE
Member of Congress



KATHLEEN M. RICE
Member of Congress



LINDA T. SANCHEZ
Member of Congress



ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT
Member of Congress



ERIC SWALWELL
Member of Congress



NIKI TSONGAS
Member of Congress



PETER WELCH
Member of Congress