

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 13, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell:

The Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) holds great promise for the fight against opioid use disorders. However, that promise -- to realize its potential to help families coping with the devastating toll of this epidemic -- can only be realized with real dollars needed to deliver life-saving prevention and treatment services. Until then, the job is not done. We urge you to finish the job by committing real, immediate funding to actually tackle this epidemic head-on.

Fortunately, legislation to accomplish this critical task is ready and available for consideration. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen's emergency supplemental legislation would commit \$600 million in funding to address the crisis right now. Similar language received bipartisan support in the Senate when we debated CARA earlier this year. While the Shaheen legislation followed the Senate's tradition of not offsetting emergency funding, the conference committee also rejected \$920 million for addiction treatment, consistent with the President's budget request, which was fully offset with bipartisan proposals. With the opioid epidemic crippling communities around the country, every day that counsellors and treatment centers do not have the resources to help those fighting opioid use disorders is a day lost. We hope that you will schedule a vote on legislation that provides substantial funding to address the opioid and heroin epidemic as soon as possible.

It is also imperative that we take on the opioid epidemic without undermining work in other areas critical to public health. Unfortunately, despite the fact that the House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill contains a \$457 million increase in funding for heroin and opioid prevention and treatment, it also makes unacceptable cuts to important accounts elsewhere. The same Americans who suffer from opioid use disorders may also need access to birth control; they may also need mammograms to detect early onset breast cancer; and they may also need health insurance through the private insurance marketplaces created by the Affordable Care Act. Unfortunately, House Republican appropriators zeroed out funding for accounts or eliminated provisions dedicated to these purposes.

We owe all Americans a strong response to the opioid crisis that shows we can work together and eschew extreme partisan goals or political games. That means providing real dollars immediately, strengthening other public health priorities, and staying away from poison pill riders. The American people have called on the Senate to do its job and pass emergency funding for opioid use disorder prevention and treatment services. We stand ready to act when you are.

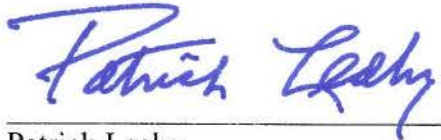
Sincerely,



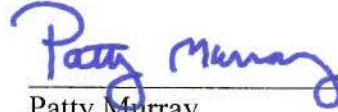
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator




Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



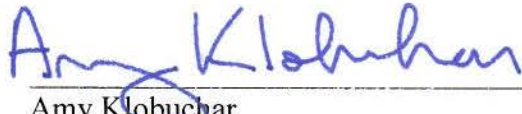
Claire McCaskill
United States Senator




Chris Murphy
United States Senator



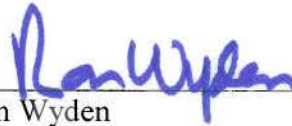
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Angus King
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



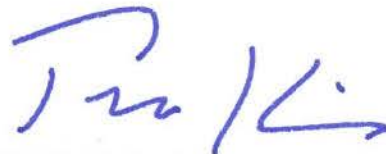
Joe Manchin
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



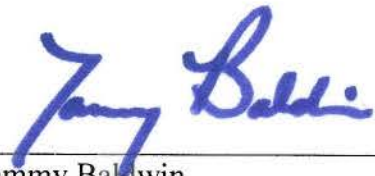
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



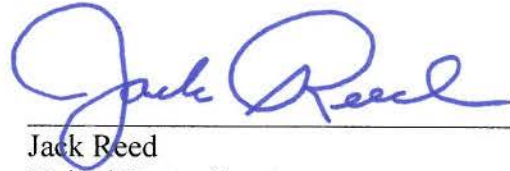
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



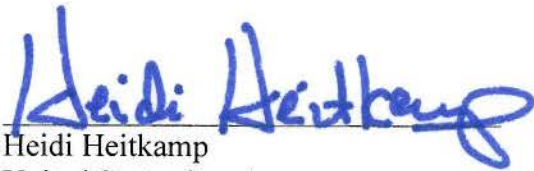
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Ben Cardin
United States Senator



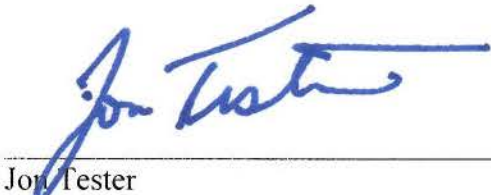
Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator



Gary Peters
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Cory Booker
United States Senator



Mazie Hirono
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Charles Schumer
United States Senator



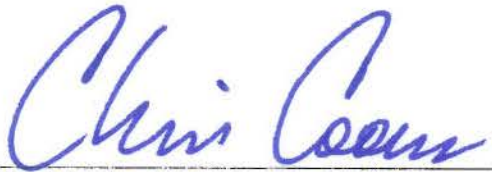
Al Franken
United States Senator



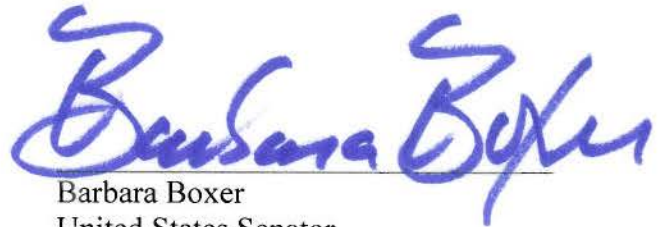
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



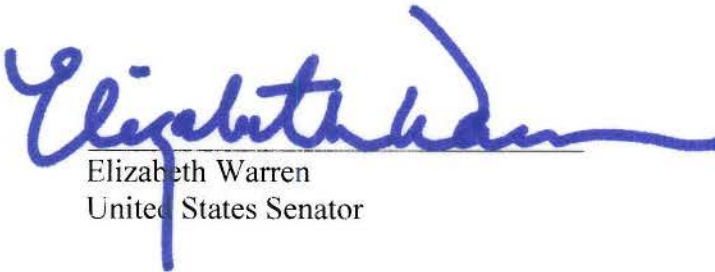
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



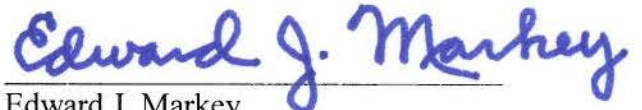
Christopher Coons
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator