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September 8, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairman Cochran and Vice Chairwoman Mikulski,

I write to thank you for your ongoing assistance in providing critical funding to fight our nation's opioid abuse epidemic and to urge you to fully fund the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA; Public Law 114-198) in the continuing resolution. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

As you know, our country is currently facing an opioid abuse crisis. Prescription opioids, heroin, and fentanyl continue to drive the increasing number of overdose deaths in my home state of New Hampshire and throughout the country. Last year in New Hampshire, there were 439 drug overdose deaths. Tragically, the New Hampshire Office of the Chief Medical Examiner estimates that we will lose 480 people to a drug overdose in 2016.

As you are likely aware, in 2014, I coauthored and helped introduce CARA and again helped reintroduce this bipartisan legislation in 2015. In July, Congress passed CARA with overwhelming support from members of both parties. The final conference report had the support of over 230 advocacy groups from around the nation, and President Obama signed the bill into law in July.

CARA provides incentives and resources for states and communities to better develop and implement proven strategies to combat addiction. The legislation would expand opioid prevention and educational efforts, expand the availability of naloxone to first responders and law enforcement, support additional resources to identify and treat incarcerated individuals suffering from a substance use disorder, expand drug take-back sites to promote the safe disposal of unwanted or unused prescription drugs, strengthen prescription drug monitoring programs, and launch a prescription opioid and heroin treatment and interventions program. As Director of National Drug Control Policy Michael Botticelli noted during a Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee field hearing I chaired in Manchester, New Hampshire, in September 2015, CARA "fills really critical gaps not only in terms of funding but in terms of policy around this issue."

As you may recall, I co-led a bipartisan letter to your Committee highlighting the efforts authorized under CARA and requesting that your Committee adequately fund them. I am grateful that last December, the Senate Appropriations Committee increased funding at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health

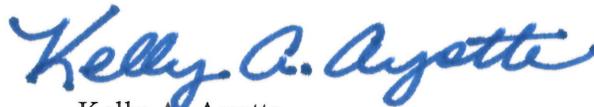
Services Administration for opioid abuse-related initiatives by 284 percent over fiscal year 2015 levels. Many of the programs and initiatives funded under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016 align with, or are similar to, those authorized under CARA.

While I greatly appreciate appropriators' continued attention to addressing opioid abuse, I believe it is critical that we treat this crisis as the public health and safety emergency that it is and ensure that the funding commitments made last year are sustained and increased. That is why I respectfully request that you fully fund CARA through the continuing resolution.

Additionally, while I understand our nation's fiscal situation is dire and must be addressed, I also believe that the opioid abuse epidemic requires the allocation of additional resources, including through additional emergency funding, which I have previously voted to support. With so many lives on the line and so many communities feeling the impact of opioid abuse, I urge your Committee to appropriate the necessary funds in the continuing resolution in order to successfully combat this epidemic and save lives.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Kelly A. Ayotte
U.S. Senator