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PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEES:
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FINANCE

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LABOR, AND PENSIONS

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING
JOINT ECONOMIC

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 15, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
The Capitol, S-230
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Democratic Leader
The Capitol, S-221
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Democratic Leader Schumer:

We write today to discuss our Nation's opioid misuse epidemic and the urgent need for Congress to provide our states with the resources they need to deal with this public health emergency. In light of recent statements from the administration asking Congress to act on this issue, we believe the upcoming supplemental and omnibus appropriations legislation present significant opportunities for additional funding.

As you are aware, the opioid misuse epidemic is taking a toll on individuals, families and communities across the Nation. It is tearing apart families and straining the resources of local governments, law enforcement and public health agencies. Although we are pleased by the recent declaration of the epidemic as a public health emergency, that action needs to be coupled with adequate, sustained resources.

On December 4, Acting HHS Secretary Eric Hargan stated that the administration is "looking forward to hearing from Congress about how they intend to address this." That means it is up to us to act. We urge you to advance a spending package that will provide substantial new resources for our families and our communities who have waited too long for help. Although the measures in the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA), the 21st Century Cures legislation and the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017 were important first steps, we must now build upon those efforts to ensure that states have adequate resources for first responders, enforcement, prevention efforts and treatment and recovery services. We must also provide more resources for research into addiction and pain, to gain a better understanding of the disease and develop innovative new treatments for substance misuse.

Opioid misuse is not a partisan issue. It is ravaging communities in every state and preys upon individuals and families regardless of party affiliation. We have worked together on this issue in the past, and with the clear statement from Acting Secretary Hargan that the administration is looking for Congress to lead the way, it is time for us to work together again. As the Senate considers pending supplemental and omnibus appropriation legislation, please make every effort to ensure that new, substantial and sustained funding for the opioid epidemic is included in any legislative package.

Thank you and we look forward to working with you to ensure that our communities receive the resources they need to effectively address this national crisis.

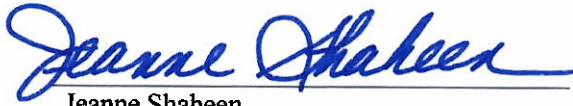
Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator




Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



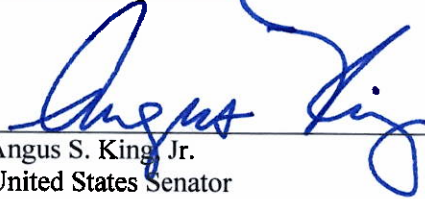
Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator