

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 5, 2018

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Room S-128, The Capitol,
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Room S-146A, The Capitol,
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
Committee
135 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services and Education
Committee
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Blunt, and Ranking Member Murray:

We write to request that, as you work to allocate funding to address the opioid and drug overdose crisis, you support the needs of children impacted by parental substance abuse. In particular, we ask that focus be placed on those in the foster care system, and prevention programs that are devoted to stopping drug use before it starts.

In FY16, 92,000 children entered foster care due to substance abuse by at least one parent. This is the second leading cause of children entering foster care, impacting 34 percent of foster care cases, just behind neglect. It is also the fastest growing cause of children being removed from their home. As we focus resources on treatment and stabilization, it is equally important that we ensure resources are available for the types of services necessary to help stabilize families over the long-term and provide direct support for children who have been impacted.

The Council of Economic Advisors estimated that opioid overdose deaths cost our nation just over \$5 billion each year, or nearly three percent of the gross domestic product. However, every \$1 invested in prevention yields a savings of up to \$10, making prevention a cost-effective investment.

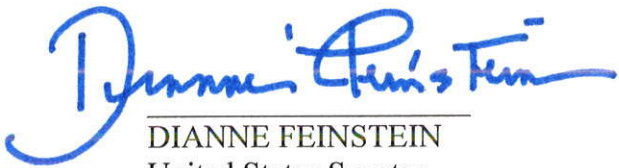
In light of these facts, we specifically request that funds are available for, but not limited to, the following:

- Community-based programs focused on preventing and reducing the incidence of drug abuse;
- Individual and family-based counseling and treatment programs;
- Trauma-informed youth services and programs specifically designed to help children who have experienced family separation and substance abuse;
- Mental and behavioral health services for youth impacted by substance use themselves or tied to parental use;
- Care coordination for family-based services and treatment to ensure each member of the family, as well as the family as a unit, is receiving the appropriate services; and,
- Reunification services to ensure that when parents receive treatment and it is safe for children who had been placed in the foster system to be returned to their care that they have the support to remain stable.

We all know the devastating impacts the opioid and drug overdose crisis has had on our communities and families across our nation, and that investing in prevention, as well as treatment, will help reduce the number of children and families impacted by this epidemic. As we take steps to address this situation together, we must ensure that we do not leave vulnerable children behind. We must also ensure that we do everything possible to prevent future generations from starting to abuse drugs in the first place.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



DIANNE FEINSTEIN

United States Senator



CHARLES GRASSLEY

United States Senator



DEBBIE STABENOW

United States Senator



KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND

United States Senator


AMY KLOBUCHAR
United States Senator


JEANNE SHAHEEN
United States Senator

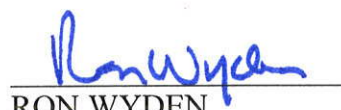

JOE DONNELLY
United States Senator


RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senator

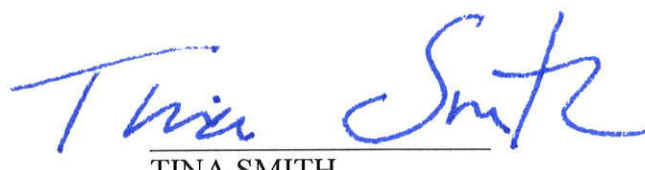

HEIDI HEITKAMP
United States Senator


THOMAS R. CARPER
United States Senator

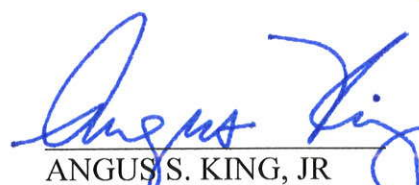

MARGARET WOOD HASSAN
United States Senator

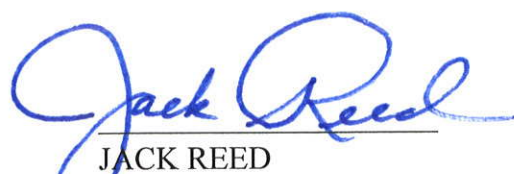

RON WYDEN
United States Senator

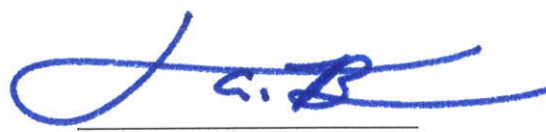

MICHAEL F. BENNET
United States Senator


TINA SMITH
United States Senator


KAMALA D. HARRIS
United States Senator

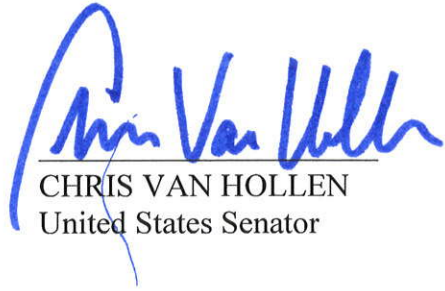

ANGUS S. KING, JR
United States Senator


JACK REED
United States Senator


CORY A. BOOKER
United States Senator



BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator



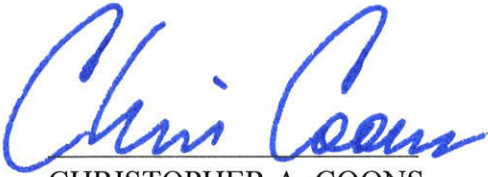
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN
United States Senator



GARY C. PETERS
United States Senator



TAMMY BALDWIN
United States Senator



CHRISTOPHER A. COONS
United States Senator



SHERROD BROWN
United States Senator