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PENNSYLVANIA

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

JOINT ECONOMIC

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 31, 2017

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

Thank you for taking action to declare the opioid epidemic a nationwide public health emergency. As you are no doubt aware, this epidemic is taking a toll on individuals, families and communities across the Nation. Opioid abuse is tearing apart families, separating children from their parents and thrusting grandparents and others into the role of primary caregiver. It is straining the resources of local government, law enforcement and public health agencies. And it is impeding economic growth as a result of the decline in the prime-age labor force participation rate. In my travels throughout Pennsylvania, one consistent theme that I have heard is that more resources are needed to tackle the crisis. I applaud your attention to this issue, but a stable, long-term investment in prevention, treatment, recovery and research is needed. To that end, last week I introduced S. 2004, the Combating the Opioid Epidemic Act, to make an additional investment in this effort.

The Combating the Opioid Epidemic Act would provide \$45 billion to address the opioid epidemic, an amount that you and Senate Republicans endorsed during consideration of the Better Care Reconciliation Act earlier this year. I was pleased to hear Sarah Huckabee Sanders suggest on October 27 that you continue to support that level of funding, when she stated that "We do feel like that \$45 billion would have been a good number." Given our shared interest in assisting communities ravaged by the opioid epidemic, I hope that we can work together to secure the critical resources that our communities desperately need, especially as Congress and the Administration work together on pending supplemental and omnibus appropriations legislation.

Our communities are in desperate need of an influx of new resources to stem the rising tide of opioid abuse, including prescription drug misuse and heroin addiction. Even \$45 billion is not enough. However, it is a good starting point, and will provide a foundation for us to build upon in the future.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator