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October 2nd, 2017

Hon. Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Kevin McCarthy
Majority Leader
H-107, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Greg Walden
Chair
Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Steny Hoyer
Minority Whip
1705 Longworth Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Energy and Commerce Committee
2322A Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressional Leaders:

As state attorneys general, our offices are on the frontlines of the opioid epidemic. We write today in bipartisan support of HR 2938 (“Road to Recovery Act”), which will expand a key tool in this battle.

America’s opioid crisis is getting dramatically worse. A recent study indicates that drug overdoses claimed as many as 65,000 American lives in 2016, a 24 percent increase from the year before. We fight this battle every day, arresting drug dealers and sweeping illegal drugs off the streets to keep them out of our communities.

But we cannot arrest our way out of this problem, because it is not just a public safety challenge—it is a public health challenge as well. People often develop opioid addiction through prescribed medical usage, with no intent by the patient to engage in abusive behavior, simply because of the addictive properties of opioid drugs. Drug addiction is a disease, not a crime. If we truly want to end this crisis, we need to focus on its root causes, including a lack of treatment for those suffering from addiction.

HR 2938 will remove an unnecessary restriction on Medicaid funding for in-patient drug treatment. The restriction is a holdover from the original 1965 Medicaid law that was intended to discourage the use of inhumane and ineffective state-run asylums. The bill will remove this restriction for drug treatment while appropriately keeping it in place for mental health institutions. This change has been called for by providers, the medical establishment, governors of both parties and the President’s Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis because it will make treatment affordable for those who need it, and create market incentives for new treatment resources. The bill also contains a provision to make it easier for children to access drug treatment.

If we have any hope of reversing this terrible trend, we need every treatment option at our disposal. Therefore, we respectfully ask you to work to ensure the passage of HR 2938 to help us fight this epidemic.

1850 M Street, NW
Twelfth Floor
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 326-6000
<http://www.naag.org/>

Sincerely,



Mike DeWine
Ohio Attorney General



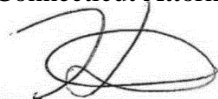
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Hawaii Attorney General



Lisa Madigan
Illinois Attorney General



Andy Beshear
Kentucky Attorney General



Janet T. Mills
Maine Attorney General



Josh Shapiro
Pennsylvania Attorney General



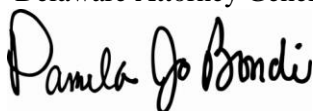
Jahna Lindemuth
Alaska Attorney General



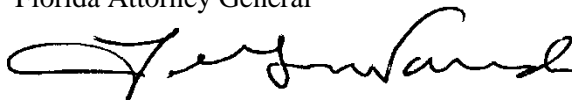
Cynthia H. Coffman
Colorado Attorney General



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Florida Attorney General



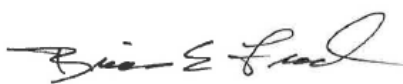
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Hector Balderas
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Mike Hunter
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South Dakota Attorney General

T.J. Donovan
Vermont Attorney General

Robert W. Ferguson
Washington Attorney General

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Schimel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brad" and last name "Schimel" clearly distinguishable.

Brad Schimel
Wisconsin Attorney General