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UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ROSA L. DeLAURO

3RD DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

November 4, 2017

CO-CHAIR, DEMOCRATIC STEERING AND  
POLICY COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
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LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,  
EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES  
AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT,  
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION,  
AND RELATED AGENCIES

Ken Welch  
Coalition for a Better Wallingford  
21 Pleasant Street  
Wallingford, Connecticut 06492

Dear Ken,

I want to extend my deepest appreciation to you and the members of the Coalition for a Better Wallingford for organizing today's event to raise awareness about the opioid crisis and the impact that it is having on our communities. I also want to thank you for rightfully raising serious concerns with Congressional actions that have had the effect of limiting the authority of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to address the opioid crisis. Today, the opioid epidemic has ravaged communities in Connecticut and across the nation. Last year, our state suffered over 900 opioid-related deaths, and more than 33,000 died from overdoses nationwide. Public officials have a moral duty to immediately address this epidemic.

In the face of the epidemic, last year, Congress allowed a bill to move forward that has had the effect of restricting the Drug Enforcement Administration. The Ensuring Patient Access and Effective Drug Enforcement Act carried in it a provision that raised the standard that the DEA must meet in order to freeze drug shipments. The bill passed unanimously by a voice vote in both chambers of the Congress and was signed into law by the prior Administration without any objection or warning from the DEA. This was a very serious mistake.

This year, I have cosponsored a bipartisan bill led by Congressman Jim Cooper to fully repeal the Ensuring Patient Access and Effective Drug Enforcement Act, and I will do everything in my power to ensure that it is taken up by the Congress. The legislation restores the tools that the DEA needs to ensure massive shipments of opioids do not make it into black markets. We should never allow the drug companies to discretely craft policy under the noses of Members of Congress and the American public. Instead, we must always make sure that legislation is crafted in a transparent and open manner.

I have also introduced legislation in this Congress to provide \$5 billion to the nation's Public Health Emergency Fund so that our federal government can immediately respond to public health crises instead of dragging their feet while people lose their lives. The Public Health Emergency Fund presently contains only \$57,000, which is not nearly enough to stem the tide of a crisis that is taking tens of thousands of American lives each year.

It is critical that the DEA have every possible tool available to stem the opioid crisis and I want to assure you and your members that, as we move forward in this Congress, I will fight relentlessly to correct the mistake that was made last year. Please continue to tirelessly make the fight against opioid abuse. Congress is an institution that responds to external pressure, and your continued advocacy in support of repealing the Ensuring Patient Access and Effective Drug Enforcement Act to restore essential enforcement tools to the DEA is critical. Thank you for your tireless advocacy on behalf of the families that have been impacted here in Wallingford and across Connecticut.

Sincerely,

ROSA DeLAURO  
Member of Congress