

September 8, 2016

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama,

As the end of the fiscal year approaches, the top priority for Congress is to fund the government. Given the current state of affairs, funding may come down to a continuing resolution. While Congress works towards identifying funding, the opioid epidemic continues to wreak havoc in communities across the country. Recently, it was announced that Maine may exceed their drug overdose death totals from last year. Given the urgency of this devastating crisis, and the limited opportunities to address it, I write asking you to work with Congressional leaders to include in the continuing resolution for FY17 the \$181 million funding authorized by the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA).

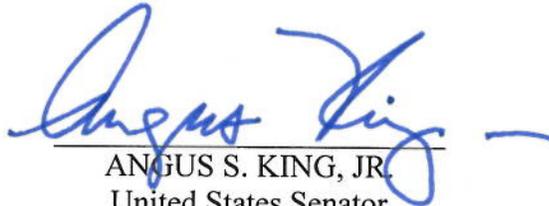
In January, during your State of the Union address, you emphasized the importance of responding to the opioid crisis. I applaud the Administration's steadfast leadership combatting the opioid epidemic and greatly appreciate you signing CARA into law on July 22, 2016. As you well know, CARA was crafted with the input of a broad range of stakeholders and passed in both chambers on a bipartisan basis, creating a comprehensive response that bolsters prevention, education, treatment and enforcement efforts across the country. Some of these measures include expanding access to medication-assisted treatment, increasing the availability of naloxone, an overdose reversal drug, strengthening prescription drug monitoring programs, and expanding the efforts of law enforcement to prevent illicit opioid use and distribution.

While I appreciate that some of the CARA policies are currently being implemented, it is important to note that some cannot even begin without funding. Therefore, funding is necessary to stem the tide of this scourge. In Maine, a lack of resources contributed to a record 272 drug overdose deaths in 2015, and we are on pace to exceed that number this year with 189 deaths through the first six months of this year.

We simply cannot let another opportunity to fund these efforts, even at these relatively low levels, pass. I urge you to negotiate with Congress to include CARA funding in the FY17 continuing resolution so that people fighting substance use disorders can receive the help they desperately need.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to continuing to work with the Administration on this important issue.

Sincerely,


ANGUS S. KING, JR.
United States Senator