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HUMAN RESOURCES
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HEALTH
SOCIAL SECURITY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0916

March 11, 2016

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Chairman
House Committee on Judiciary

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member
House Committee on Judiciary

Dear Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Conyers:

Millions of families in the United States, including many in my own district in Florida, have been devastated by drug addiction. Too many of our loved ones are losing their struggle with heroin and other highly addictive substances.

The facts are sobering as this public health emergency has reached across all corners of the United States. Nationally, 125 Americans die from drug overdoses each day. My home state of Florida is at the epicenter of the epidemic. In fact, Florida heroin overdose deaths have increased 900 percent in recent years, rising from 48 in 2010 to 447 in 2014. This crisis is destroying families and lives every day, and requires a serious and comprehensive solution.

That is why I urge your committee to begin immediate consideration of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) (H.R. 953), legislation which I have cosponsored. This bill has broad bipartisan support, and provides a comprehensive approach to tackle the drug addiction epidemic by funding drug education efforts; targeting federal grants for treatment and prevention to communities most at risk; and establishing a federal task force to develop best practices for pain medication. Additionally, the bill delivers much-needed resources to our law enforcement agencies.

The House of Representatives must quickly begin debate on this important legislation, and that begins with your Committee. Families, neighbors, and friends are pleading for Congress to take action. The growing heroin addiction epidemic has touched far too many people and overwhelmed our local emergency rooms and law enforcement agencies. We can't turn a blind eye to this emergency as we lose more of our loved ones.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vern Buchanan".

Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress

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