



February 15, 2024

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
568 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Republican Leader  
U.S. Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Democratic Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2433 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Brian Patrick Kennedy**  
Speaker Pro Tempore  
Rhode Island General  
Assembly  
President, NCSL

**Sabrina N. Lewellen**  
Deputy Director - Senate  
Assistant Secretary of the  
Senate  
Arkansas General Assembly  
Staff Chair, NCSL

**Tim Storey**  
Chief Executive Officer  
NCSL

Re: SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act (S. 3393/H.R. 4531)

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson, Leader McConnell, and Leader Jeffries:

On behalf of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the bipartisan organization representing the legislatures of our nation's states, commonwealths and territories, we write in strong support of the House and Senate finding a bipartisan path forward to reconcile their versions of the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act. This legislation provides states with critical tools needed to address the substance use disorder and overdose crisis facing the nation.

NCSL has long supported efforts that address behavioral health through a comprehensive approach of prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery and that provide states with flexibility to address the most pressing behavioral health issues facing their communities. We applaud efforts in both bills that fund key programs including training of behavioral health professionals and first responders, support for wraparound treatment and recovery support services, grants that facilitate state efforts to collect overdose data, and data on adverse childhood experiences, and funding options for states regarding fentanyl and xylazine test strips. With [49%](#) of Americans living in a mental health workforce shortage area, we also strongly support measures to address behavioral health workforce shortages. While the House and Senate HELP versions of the bill differ with respect to Medicaid, NCSL urges Congress to support measures in the SUPPORT Act that promote the mutually agreed upon goals of the state-federal Medicaid partnership of improving outcomes for recipients and flexibility, transparency, and accountability in administration of programs.

With over [48 million people](#) in the U.S. suffering from a substance use disorder, [rising rates of overdose deaths that are predicted to reach 112,000 for 2023](#) and significant behavioral health workforce shortages, **NCSL cannot underscore enough the need for swift passage of a comprehensive SUPPORT Act reauthorization in order to enable states and other stakeholders to continue their efforts to address the ongoing overdose crisis.** We stand ready to work with you as the legislative process continues. Please contact NCSL staff Lauren Kallins ([Lauren.Kallins@ncsl.org](mailto:Lauren.Kallins@ncsl.org)) with any additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tim Storey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

**Tim Storey**

Chief Executive Officer

National Conference of State Legislatures

Cc:

Senate Finance Committee

Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee

House Energy Commerce Committee