

**Sample letter to US Senators:** This is a sample letter for all to use as a model to write certain Senators and make specific action requests or “asks.” We are asking for 2 things as described on page 2 of this document. We should all send a letter like this to every Senator on the Judiciary Committee, the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, and the Finance Committee, plus we should all send to our Senators from our states. If you can only write to a few Senators, please write to your Senators from your states, and both the Chair and Ranking Member for each committee. See separate document for lists of committee members, with Chairs and Ranking Members annotated.

**Dear Senator John Doe,**

**(Sample Introductory Paragraphs:** Here are 2 sample paragraphs to help start your letters. Please use your own words as much as possible.)

I am writing to you today (as a constituent who resides in your state/in your role as a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee/in your role as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee/in your role as a member of the Senate Finance Committee). I am writing to express my grave concern about the unintended consequences of our country’s continuing war on opioid drugs. (I am/my family member is) a person who suffers from an incurable rare illness that causes very severe, constant intractable pain. (I have/my family member has) received tremendous benefit from opioid pain medications that were prescribed, as a last resort, to manage (my/his/her) constant severe pain after all standard pain treatments had been tried and failed to help. As a result of actions taken by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and other regulatory agencies, (I/my family member) (have lost/will soon lose) access to the medications that (I/my family member) (rely/relies) on to manage the pain and have a decent quality of life.

During the past two years, deaths have continued to rise from illicit drug use, even as prescriptions for opioid medications have declined. There are two very separate problems going on that involve the same substances:

- The use of medically prescribed opioids to treat painful conditions, and
- The misuse and abuse of illegally obtained opioids often resulting in death

The conflating of these two very separate issues – the use of prescribed opioids to treat painful conditions and the abuse of illicit drugs – is causing unintended consequences for chronic pain patients. Both chronic pain and addiction are very serious medical problems that deserve compassionate care, but recent efforts to identify and target “pill mill” doctors and pharmacies are causing innocent pain patients to lose the medical care they require.

**(Next paragraph:** Tell your story in your own words. Be concise. You probably already have good sample language from letters you have previously written to the California Medical Board or Asst US Attorney Benjamin Barron.)

**(Sample paragraphs to make transition from your story to our “asks.”** Please use your own words as much as possible.)

**Senator Doe,** please understand that persons who suffer from severe, intractable pain have also suffered greatly from discrimination and demeaning treatment from medical professionals, the general public, and sometimes from their own friends and associates. Severe intractable pain conditions are very real and, if untreated or undertreated, can result in physiological deterioration and even death due

to cardiac arrest, stroke, or adrenal failure. (I am/my family member is) a responsible, law-abiding citizen who has done nothing wrong. Despite the fact that (I have/my family member has) used opioid medications responsibly, never misused or diverted medications, and been stable on (my/his/her) opioid dose for many years, (I am/my family member is) (now experiencing/will soon experience) the same constant excruciating pain (I/my family member) endured for years prior to finding appropriate medical care. This is the other side of President Trump's opioid public health emergency...the return to horrific suffering of innocent citizens who happen to be seriously ill. As far as I am concerned, deliberate action by our government that results in the withdrawal of readily available and effective pain treatment from a person suffering intractable pain is equivalent to the commission of torture. This is a violation of human rights, an injustice of the highest order that must stop now!

**Senator Doe**, the facts about the risks of opioid medications when properly used by severe chronic pain patients do not support the actions that have been taken by Congress, Federal agencies, and state agencies. (I call/my family calls) upon you today to take action to address this situation.

**(Please include the next 2 paragraphs, paraphrased as you wish, but stick to the basic ideas. These are specific recommendations that Families for Intractable Pain Relief will also be putting forward on behalf of our group.)**

First, please support the establishment through regulation or legislation of a Federal program that would allow interested qualified physicians to register and be certified to prescribe high doses of opioids for severe intractable pain patients for whom all other treatments have failed. This program would authorize trained physicians to treat severe intractable pain as needed without restrictions on opioid dosing or duration of care, and without restrictions on non-oral routes of administration or the off-label use of non-opioid medications. We recommend that action be taken on an emergency basis to implement this program immediately for a period of one year or until a permanent program can be established. Also, we recommend that a permanent program as described be implemented through FDA regulation or Federal law to ensure that access to necessary pain care, including high-dose opioid treatment and other non-standard treatment, is available to all patients who require such care.

Second, please take immediate action to initiate or support an investigation by the Senate Judiciary Committee, in partnership with the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, into the unintended consequences of the DoJ/DEA war on opioid drugs campaign and the use of their data analytics program to target physicians and pharmacies based solely on a 2-year snapshot of prescribing data with no contextual information about the physicians or the patients they treat.

**(Concluding paragraph:** Please use your own words as much as possible.)

**Senator Doe**, severe pain patients are suffering and dying because of the actions that the Congress, CDC, DEA, and other agencies have taken. Please act now before (I become/my family member becomes) the next casualty in the ongoing war on opioid pain medications.

Sincerely,

John Q. Pain Patient/Jane Family Member

Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee  
as of April 27, 2018

The Senate Judiciary Committee oversees the activities of the DEA, so it's important that we all send letters to these Senators. This committee can call for an investigation of the unintended consequences of the DEA's data analytics program that drives their targeting of physicians and pharmacies.

Republican Members

- Chuck Grassley, Chairman (IA)
- Orrin G. Hatch (UT)
- Lindsey Graham (SC)
- John Cornyn (TX)
- Michael S. Lee (UT)
- Ted Cruz (TX)
- Ben Sasse (NE)
- Jeff Flake (AZ)
- Mike Crapo (ID)
- Thom Tillis (NC)
- John Kennedy (LA)

Democratic Members

- Dianne Feinstein, Ranking Member (CA)
- Patrick Leahy (VT)
- Dick Durbin (IL)
- Sheldon Whitehouse (RI)
- Amy Klobuchar (MN)
- Christopher A. Coons (DE)
- Richard Blumenthal (CT)
- Mazie Hirono (HI)
- Cory Booker (NJ)
- Kamala Harris (CA)

Members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee  
as of April 27, 2018

REPUBLICANS BY RANK

- Lamar Alexander, Chairman (TN)
- Michael B. Enzi (WY)
- Richard Burr (NC)
- Johnny Isakson (GA)
- Rand Paul (KY)
- Susan Collins (ME)
- Bill Cassidy, M.D. (LA)
- Todd Young (IN)
- Orrin Hatch (UT)
- Pat Roberts (KS)
- Lisa Murkowski (AK)

- Tim Scott (SC)

#### DEMOCRATS BY RANK

- Patty Murray, Ranking Member (WA)
- Bernie Sanders (VT)
- Robert P. Casey, Jr (PA)
- Michael F. Bennet (CO)
- Tammy Baldwin (WI)
- Christopher S. Murphy (CT)
- Elizabeth Warren (MA)
- Tim Kaine (VA)
- Maggie Hassan (NH)
- Tina Smith (MN)
- Doug Jones (AL)

#### Members of the Senate Finance Committee as of April 27, 2018

#### Republicans

Orrin G. Hatch, Chairman (UT)  
Chuck Grassley (R - IA)  
Mike Crapo (R - ID)  
Pat Roberts (R - KS)  
Michael B. Enzi (R - WY)  
John Cornyn (R - TX)  
John Thune (R - SD)  
Richard Burr (R - NC)  
Johnny Isakson (R - GA)  
Rob Portman (R - OH)  
Patrick J. Toomey (R - PA)  
Dean Heller (R - NV)  
Tim Scott (R - SC)  
Bill Cassidy (R - LA)

#### Democrats

Ron Wyden, Ranking Member (OR)  
Debbie Stabenow (D - MI)  
Maria Cantwell (D - WA)  
Bill Nelson (D - FL)  
Robert Menendez (D - NJ)  
Thomas R. Carper (D - DE)  
Benjamin L. Cardin (D - MD)  
Sherrod Brown (D - OH)  
Michael F. Bennet (D - CO)  
Robert P. Casey, Jr. (D - PA)

Mark R. Warner (D - VA)  
Claire McCaskill (D - MO)  
Sheldon Whitehouse (D - RI)