



USET

SOVEREIGNTY PROTECTION FUND

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The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
United States Senate
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Warren,

We write on behalf of United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF) to convey our strong support for the Comprehensive Addiction Resources Emergency (CARE) Act of 2021. As you know, USET SPF Tribal Nations, and Tribal Nations across the country, continue to experience the destructive effects of substance use disorder--often at higher rates than non-Indian communities. Yet, previous Congressional efforts aimed at directing resources toward this crisis nationwide have either excluded Indian Country entirely or fallen short of providing sufficient levels of funding. In response to Tribal concerns and priorities, the CARE Act of 2021 would ensure Tribal Nations, like other units of government, are well-equipped to combat the opioid epidemic and other substance use disorders in our communities.

USET SPF is a non-profit, inter-tribal organization advocating on behalf of thirty-three (33) federally recognized Tribal Nations from the Northeastern Woodlands to the Everglades and across the Gulf of Mexico.¹ USET SPF is dedicated to promoting, protecting, and advancing the inherent sovereign rights and authorities of Tribal Nations and in assisting its membership in dealing effectively with public policy issues.

The CARE Act acknowledges Tribal sovereignty and the trust obligation by ensuring Tribal Nations have access to substantial direct funding, with an option to receive this funding through Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act contracts and compacts, and other resources to treat addiction through provisions, including:

- **\$790 million per year in direct funding to Tribal Nations** to help fight the substance use epidemic and invest in prevention and treatment;

¹ USET SPF member Tribal Nations include: Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas (TX), Aroostook Band of Micmac Indians (ME), Catawba Indian Nation (SC), Cayuga Nation (NY), Chickahominy Indian Tribe (VA), Chickahominy Indian Tribe--Eastern Division (VA), Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana (LA), Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana (LA), Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (NC), Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians (ME), Jena Band of Choctaw Indians (LA), Mashantucket Pequot Indian Tribe (CT), Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe (MA), Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida (FL), Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MS), Mohegan Tribe of Indians of Connecticut (CT), Monacan Indian Nation (VA), Nansemond Indian Nation (VA), Narragansett Indian Tribe (RI), Oneida Indian Nation (NY), Pamunkey Indian Tribe (VA), Passamaquoddy Tribe at Indian Township (ME), Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point (ME), Penobscot Indian Nation (ME), Poarch Band of Creek Indians (AL), Rappahannock Tribe (VA), Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (NY), Seminole Tribe of Florida (FL), Seneca Nation of Indians (NY), Shinnecock Indian Nation (NY), Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana (LA), Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe (VA) and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) (MA).

Because there is Strength in Unity

- **\$7.5 million in additional funding for Tribal Nations and regional Tribal epidemiology centers** to improve data collection on drug overdoses;
- **\$50 million a year to Tribal colleges and universities**, Indian Health Service-funded organizations, and medical training programs that partner with Tribal Nations and Tribal organizations to train Native health professionals to improve substance use disorder treatment services;
- **\$150 million a year in funding to Native non-profits and clinics**, including projects designed to test innovative service delivery and culturally-informed care models to tackle addiction; and
- **\$1 billion per year to expand access to the overdose reversal drug naloxone** and provide this lifesaving medicine to states to distribute to Tribal Nations, first responders, public health departments, and the public.

In total, this bill would provide approximately \$1 billion annually over a period of ten years directly to Indian Country to address the disproportionate impacts opioid abuse and addiction is having in our communities. This level of funding and its method of delivery are reflective of a strong commitment to recognizing our governmental status and the unique relationship between the federal government and Tribal Nations.

USET SPF commends Senator Warren for her continued commitment to working with Indian Country during the drafting and reintroduction of the CARE Act. Again, we strongly support this legislation and call upon Congress for its swift passage. Should you have questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Liz Malerba, USET SPF Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs, at LMalerba@usetinc.org or 615-838-5906.

Sincerely,



Kirk Francis
President



Kitcki A. Carroll
Executive Director