



February 23, 2006

The Honorable Michael B. Enzi
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
644 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Barton
Chair
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Dingell
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Enzi and Barton and Senator Kennedy and Congressmen Dingell:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM), the National League of Cities (NLC), and the National Association of Counties (NACo), we have joined together to express our concerns regarding the current Ryan White Reauthorization negotiations. Collectively we represent every municipal government in this country, including the 51 Eligible Metropolitan Areas (EMA) who will be directly affected by your reauthorization efforts.

We oppose reauthorization proposals that would shift CARE Act resources away from Title I communities and the states where they are located. Such proposals will not solve problems of inadequate appropriations and would severely harm our ability to meet the demonstrated needs in our communities.

We oppose efforts to eliminate the "80/20" provision in CARE Act Title II that allows states to receive partial credit for Title I cases in their Title II formula allocations. Providing states with partial credit for people with AIDS in their state who reside in an EMA appropriately recognizes the heavy burden of service provision in high prevalence areas of the state.

We oppose the Administration's proposal in the FY 2007 proposed budget to give the Secretary the authority to transfer up to 5 percent of any CARE Act Title to any other Title. The CARE Act titles provide the Congress, the Administration, and CARE Act grantees the ability to target and monitor resources to diverse populations impacted by the epidemic and funds should not be shifted among titles.

Changes are needed and we **would support** a change from 2,000 AIDS cases over the past five years to 1,500 living AIDS cases adjusted for reporting delays and then to living HIV and AIDS cases adjusted for reporting delays at a threshold determined to be equivalent to the 1,500 living AIDS case threshold when a national HIV/AIDS data set is in place.

We would support compromise language on the hold harmless protection proposed by the Communities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief Coalition (CAEAR), which represents the

interests of all 51 EMAs that receive Title I funds. The CAEAR compromise would accelerate allowable reductions for jurisdictions receiving the protection from the current rate of 15 percent to 21 percent over five years. It is important that shifts in formula funding are implemented in a way that minimizes harm to existing systems of HIV/AIDS care.

The CARE Act is the nation's largest investment in the care of people with HIV/AIDS. It has dramatically improved the quality of life of people living with HIV-disease and their families, reduced use of costly inpatient care, and increased access to care for low-income, underserved populations, including people of color.

We thank you for your attention to this important matter and we look forward to working with you as these proposals move forward. If there are any questions please contact Crystal Swann, USCM at 202-861-6707; Jennifer McGee, NLC at 202-626-3000; or Jennifer Wilson, NACo at 202-393-6226

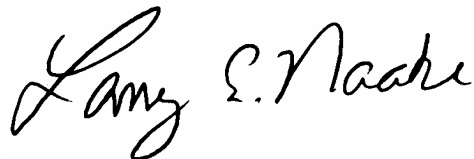
Sincerely,



J. Thomas Cochran
Executive Director
The United States Conference of Mayors



Donald J. Borut
Executive Director
National League of Cities



Larry Naake
Executive Director
National Association of Counties