June 22, 2021

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Van Hollen and Ranking Member Hyde-Smith:

We write in strong support of funding the Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Program, most recently reauthorized by section 8203 of Subtitle K of the SUPPORT Act (P.L. 115-271), and the training and technical assistance authorized by section 8204 of the Act from within the appropriated amount for this program at the highest possible level in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. For FY 2021, these programs were funded at $102 million and $2.5 million.

In the midst of the devastating drug overdose epidemic, the DFC Program warrants the highest possible funding level because it has proven effective in reducing youth substance use. According to independent research in communities where DFC coalitions exist, rates of past thirty-day use among middle school students for alcohol, tobacco and marijuana declined by twelve, thirty-six, and eight percent, respectively. Among high school students, rates for alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and prescription drugs declined by twenty-four, thirty-nine, seven, and thirty percent, respectively. (ICF International, National Evaluation of the Drug-Free Communities Support Program, March 2021 Report)

DFC coalitions exist in 733 communities across the nation and provide support to 2.4 million middle school students and 3.4 million high school students. The program requires a community to demonstrate local commitment before it is eligible to receive federal funds, which means that at least twelve sectors within the community must come together to plan and implement evidence-based programs that will meet the community’s unique needs in reducing drug use. All grantees are required to provide a dollar-for-dollar match in non-federal funds up to the maximum grant amount of $125,000 per year. The required emphasis on local data collection, community buy-in, and participation among multiple sectors is central to the DFC coalitions’ success and allows grantees to respond effectively to emerging drug trends.

For these reasons, we urge you to fund the DFC Program at the highest possible level in FY 2022. This will ensure that the maximum number of communities are equipped to effectively reduce all types of youth drug use and have the evaluation results to prove it.

Sincerely,
Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

Charles E. Grassley  
United States Senator

John Cornyn  
United States Senator

Roger Marshall M.D.  
United States Senator

Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
United States Senate

Rob Portman  
United States Senator

Susan M. Collins  
United States Senate

Thom Tillis  
United States Senator

Jon Tester  
United States Senator

Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator
Tim Kaine
United States Senator

Alex Padilla
United States Senate

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Tina Smith
United States Senator

Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator
Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator

Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator

Robert Menendez  
United States Senator
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

Ben Ray Luján
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator