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COMMITTEES
APPROPRIATIONS
ARMED SERVICES
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

February 7, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you and your administration draft your budget for fiscal year 2021, I wish to highlight specific programs and priorities that I believe will benefit both the people of West Virginia and this nation. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I continue to be an advocate for smart spending. As a former Governor and small business owner, I know what it's like to balance a budget. I believe we need to do more to rein in spending and reduce our ballooning national debt, but I also believe that there are ways to do so without minimizing the type of investments that will help our country grow and succeed.

Addressing the Opioid Epidemic

My state remains ground zero of the opioid epidemic. With an overdose rate of 57.8 per 100,000 people, West Virginia has the highest rate in the nation by a large margin. While we have invested significant resources in addressing this national epidemic, we have not done enough to target those resources to the places that need it the most. That is why I not only urge you to include increased funding for federal programs that are effectively helping states and communities address the opioid epidemic like the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant, the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program, and the Drug Free Communities Program, I also encourage you to target funding to ensure that the communities with the highest rates of death due to drug overdose receive the federal support they need to succeed. Additionally, we need to focus efforts on responding to the rise in opioid-related infectious diseases. In states hit hardest by the epidemic, we have seen high rates of viral hepatitis, HIV, and other diseases. I encourage you to support efforts to prevent and treat these illnesses, as they will have a lasting impact on our communities and families.

Federal agencies also need to take administrative actions to address this crisis. In particular, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) should require mandatory prescriber education on the dangers of opioid misuse and addiction and review the efficacy of labeling opioids for long-term chronic pain relief. Sufficient funding for agencies like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and the FDA is also vital because each has a critical role to play in addressing this epidemic and saving lives. We could provide roughly \$1 billion in additional funding every year for treatment services through a one-cent-per-milligram stewardship fee on opioids. It is past time that we set realistic prices on these dangerous drugs that reflect their true cost to society.

Families across West Virginia and throughout this country have been torn apart as a result of the opioid epidemic. In my state and elsewhere, we have experienced a dramatic increase of children and youth experiencing homelessness in addition to our record levels of children in foster care. McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance funding provides critical aid to school districts that serve these students, but it alone cannot accomplish the task. I urge you to prioritize funding for programs at the Department of Education and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that address children and youth homelessness. No child can effectively learn when they are worried about whether or not they will have a safe place to sleep at night.

Balancing Energy Production and Environmental Stewardship

As Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) and as a Senator from one of our nation's leading energy-producing states, I understand the importance of supporting federal funding for programs within the Department of Energy (DOE). Achieving true energy independence while creating the technology solutions needed to address climate change requires a comprehensive plan that utilizes all of our domestic resources and ensures U.S. leadership in energy technology. In the last year, I have worked tirelessly to pass numerous bills that would provide DOE with the tools and resources needed to move the ball forward on innovations for carbon capture utilization and sequestration (CCUS), advanced nuclear technologies, energy storage, energy efficiency, and renewables like solar, wind, and geothermal, while supporting energy workforce and economic development across the country. In order to continue these efforts at DOE, I encourage you to support strong investments in the incredible work taking place at the National Energy and Technology Laboratory (NETL) as well as DOE's Fossil Energy Office and the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. I also hope that you include robust funding for other key programs within DOE that have a major impact on my state like the State Energy Program, the Weatherization Assistance Program, and Advanced Research Projects Agency – Energy (ARPA-E).

I am also excited about the Appalachian Storage Hub's potential to create jobs and make us a leader in energy storage and manufacturing, and I was proud to help secure language in the FY2020 appropriations bill's explanatory statement calling for a study on the economic and national security benefits of a petrochemical storage hub. I encourage you to include strong support for research, development and innovation in the energy sector through the DOE's Loan Program Office, particularly the office's Title XVII Innovating Technology Loan Guarantee Program, which encourages our energy sector to push toward the future by providing loan guarantees for innovative energy projects like the Appalachian Storage Hub.

West Virginians, like all Americans, want clean air to breathe and clean water to drink. We must continue to support federal environmental partnerships that protect the air from unsafe toxins and environmental degradation. We must also maintain robust funding for programs such as state revolving funds, stewardship grants, and other environmental programs administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers that safeguard drinking water. I also urge you to remember those communities whose residents face particularly pernicious threats from serious contamination and fully fund efforts such as the Brownfields Program to restore and reuse contaminated land.

West Virginians take great pride in our wild and wonderful outdoor heritage and the natural features that have shaped us physically and culturally. Our state boasts some of the best areas for hiking, fishing, hunting, trail riding, and white water rafting in the world. As you know, last year Congress passed the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (P.L. 116-9) which permanently reauthorized the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Last year, I led a bipartisan group of Senators to introduce the LWCF Permanent Funding Act which would guarantee that LWCF would be

funded at its full authorization level of \$900 million every year. For the last 50 years, the LWCF has preserved public land and ensured access to outdoor recreation across the country, and I urge you to fund the LWCF at the full authorized level in the upcoming fiscal year to provide critical public access to the great outdoors.

My state feels very strongly about preserving and protecting our public lands for future generations. Properly maintaining our parks and wild areas is vital to keeping them accessible to everyone. As you know, the National Park Service (NPS) has amassed a nearly \$12 billion maintenance backlog that has delayed the upkeep of visitor centers, rest stops, trails, campgrounds, and roads managed by the NPS. This year, a bipartisan group of Senators reintroduced the Restore Our Parks Act, a bill to address the maintenance backlog by taking existing government revenue and allocating it to the NPS, which was reported out of Committee in November. Our National Parks, National Forests, and other public lands have provided wonderful opportunities for recreation for generations of Americans. I urge you to acknowledge the bipartisan support for addressing this maintenance backlog and provide ample funding in your budget to ensure our Federal lands remain pristine and accessible.

Rebuilding our Infrastructure

Our nation and my state are in need of critical investments in infrastructure. West Virginia has over 23,000 miles of secondary roads that have been identified as needing repair, along with over 1,200 bridges that are structurally deficient. Reinvigorating our surface transportation funding through reauthorization of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, which expires this year in September, is necessary, but we need to do more. That's why I support a comprehensive proposal that invests in all of the ways that Americans connect with each other, through our roads, bridges, airports, pipelines, and broadband networks. In the meantime, this budget proposal is an opportunity to make a significant down payment to this effort. I encourage you to support initiatives and programs that help connect and open up rural states to the rest of the country. For example, through FY20 appropriations, I was proud to help support the first dedicated funding since 2012 for the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS), which includes Corridor H in my state. I ask that you support full funding for programs like the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Grant Program, Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, ADHS, Airport Improvement Program (AIP), and Essential Air Service (EAS), which are all crucial to assisting rural areas.

Federal highway funding is important, but in the 21st Century, transportation infrastructure is only one piece of the puzzle. Broadband connectivity is equally important to connecting Americans with economic opportunities and allowing them to compete in a global marketplace. I encourage you to continue our robust investments in rural broadband loan and grant programs like the ReConnect and Community Connect Programs within the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and I hope your budget builds on the language I secured in last year's appropriations package that prioritized funding to areas with mountainous terrain. Congress provided similar direction to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to ensure that they followed through with their commitment to assisting rural areas with mountainous terrain that face higher buildout costs in the grant programs under their authority that will disperse billions of dollars in the coming years to promote broadband deployment in rural America.

Creating Jobs and Growing the Economy

We must also focus on protecting and supporting American jobs, which is why it is critical that we fund agencies like the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the Economic Development Administration

(EDA), the Manufacturing Extension Partnerships (MEP), and the Small Business Administration (SBA), which help support economic growth and development, particularly in rural America, through programs like the Assistance to Coal Communities (ACC) Initiative, which has had incredible success in my home state and others. Through initiatives like the Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Grants, ARC and EDA are working every day to revitalize coal communities and help to diversify Appalachian economies, while the SBA helps communities across the country by helping to create jobs and economic resilience. Assistance to small and mid-size manufacturers through MEP ensure that our industries continue to grow, thrive, and retain employment of West Virginians. Housing assistance programs also provide critical support for many West Virginians who have fallen on hard times.

West Virginia is home to many of our nation's federal facilities and it is our privilege to have over 21,000 federal employees call our state home. Important facilities such as the Bureau of Fiscal Service for the Department of the Treasury in Parkersburg, the Criminal Justice Information Service (CJIS) division of the FBI in Clarksburg, and the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Advanced Training Center in Harper's Ferry are crucial federal assets as well as critical employers for the region. In Fairmont, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Forecasting Center provides high performance computing for critical weather satellites, while the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Independent Verification & Validation (IV&V) Facility provides independent assessments of NASA programs to keep our astronauts and scientists safe. Finally, the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Green Bank Observatory (GBO) examines the far reaches of space to answer fundamental questions about our universe. I look forward to working with you to ensure these sites and others have the support and resources they need to continue to excel.

Helping our Families, Friends, and Neighbors

We need to invest in our future and that begins with our children. In an effort to ensure that every child and youth receives assistance, I strongly support federal programs like Head Start, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and the Child Care and Development Block Grant. We must also support our public schools and provide them with the resources they need so that every student can receive a quality education that puts them on a path for success. Providing funding for Title I and Career and Technical Education at the Department of Education is a necessary step in achieving this goal.

West Virginians understand the value of keeping our promises to those who have paved the way for us to succeed. To our seniors, Social Security and Medicare are not just government programs, they are promises earned through years of hard work and sacrifice. By protecting these programs while discussing responsible ways to get the federal deficit under control, we can keep our promise to our seniors in a fiscally responsible way. As a state with a large elderly population, my state's rural and elderly populations rely on the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for critical rural health programs like Community Health Centers and rural hospitals, as well as training for healthcare workers. I ask you to support these important programs. We must also maintain incentives to keep medical professionals in underserved and rural communities and support for important medical research that has the potential to save and improve lives.

We live in the greatest country on earth. No family should have to worry about being able to put food on the table. Programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) are very important to the people I represent. I encourage you to continue to support funding for these important programs so that no child in West Virginia goes hungry. I also encourage you to support housing assistance programs that are critical

for so many West Virginians. In order to ensure West Virginians are able to better insulate themselves from high-energy costs, a problem that disproportionately affects low-income households, I hope that you will include adequate funding for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).

Keeping our Promise to Coal Miners

As you know, at the end of last year Democrats and Republicans in Congress came together to secure pensions and healthcare for nearly 100,000 coal miners, their widows, and their families, finally making good on the promise this country made to them back in 1946. These patriotic Americans have done everything this country has asked of them, including willingly risking exposure to harmful substances, such as coal dust, without hesitation. Unfortunately, the federal regulations on which they depend for a safe and healthy work place have not received the attention they need and deserve. I urge you to provide the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) with the resources it needs to enforce the laws on the books and finalize the new silica standard to align it with the established exposure levels under existing Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations.

West Virginia coal mines and miners have powered this nation through some of our toughest and some of our proudest moments. That's why I believe we need to give back to coal communities for the sacrifices they made for our nation. I ask you continue to support the efforts of the Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) within DOI that manages the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Fund which finances the reclamation of abandoned mine lands through fees paid by the coal industry. OSMRE also oversees the AML Reclamation Economic Development Pilot Program which provides grants to six Appalachian states including West Virginia. This important program that allows local communities, states and the federal government to work together to pursue environmentally sustainable and economically productive development goals.

Safeguarding Our National Security

As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and Senate Appropriations Committee, there is nothing I take more seriously than ensuring that our military has the tools it needs to compete in 21st Century Great Powers Competition. While I recognize the role we will need to continue to play in the Middle East, we cannot continue to bleed resources solely in the region while China and Russia make investments in places like South America and Africa.

When looking at the future security needs of our country and the skill sets required to meet those challenges, I have never been more convinced that our Reserve Component is an asset we should not squander. We need to ensure that the Reserves and National Guard have concurrent and proportionate fielding of equipment and parity of benefits. Of particular interest to me is the future of the C-130 program. We need this heavy airlift capability and by pushing more C-130Js to the reserve component, we are ensuring that they are able to be deployed and carry out their domestic missions, too.

Finally, as the Cybersecurity Subcommittee Ranking Member on the Senate Armed Services Committee, bolstering the defense industrial base from cyber attacks is a high priority. Knowing that foreign competitors are infiltrating industrial base networks to ascertain key information on important programs and contracts both jeopardizes our national security and allows them to use American intellectual property for their own gain.

Honoring Our Veterans

Military service is a difficult, noble task, and we owe a great deal to all the patriotic American men, women, and families who have answered the highest call to service. We made a promise to all who bravely fought to defend our nation, often in harsh conditions, that when they return home we will take care of them. We must ensure that the VA has the resources it needs to properly implement the VA MISSION Act and invest in our VA infrastructure to ensure it can meet the needs of our Veterans and caregivers today and for years into the future. This includes significantly reducing the 49,000 hiring vacancies currently open within the VA system. In many places in West Virginia, the VA is the only medical care for miles around. High quality care starts with maintaining and equipping a workforce of exceptional doctors and nurses to treat Veterans in a timely manner.

A Hand Up, Not a Hand Out

My grandmother, Mama Kay, used to tell me that we should give people “a hand up, not a hand out.” In my opinion, these investments are the hand up this country needs to succeed. I appreciate your consideration of my budget priorities, which I believe are in the best interest of my state and our country. I look forward to working with you and my colleagues in Congress to create a budget that is bipartisan and fiscally responsible.

Warm regards,



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator