

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4802

November 5, 2012

Administrator Michele Leonhart  
Drug Enforcement Administration  
U.S. Department of Justice  
8701 Morrisette Drive  
Springfield, Virginia 22152-1080

Dear Administrator Leonhart,

Let me begin by congratulating you on the most recent National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day on September 29. Of the efforts to make a difference in the problem of prescription drug misuse and abuse across the country, this success is a shining light to all who work on this troubling issue. The volume of drugs collected at each of these take-back days simply underscores the magnitude of the problem. Thank you for this huge effort to take unwanted drugs out of circulation and to keep them out of unintended hands.

I am writing today to ask about the status of regulations being developed by your agency to provide for permanent, ongoing, and responsible methods for disposal of unused prescription drugs. As you know, Congress passed the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010, which the President then signed. This new law amends the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) to provide a legal means for transferring possession of controlled substance medications from users to appropriate entities who will safely dispose of them. I believe full implementation of this new law is a key step forward in our collective efforts to fight prescription drug abuse.

As you know, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has termed the abuse of prescription drugs in this country an epidemic, and West Virginia has been especially hard hit. Between 2001 and 2008, more than nine out of ten of drug-related deaths in West Virginia involved prescription drugs. From 1999 to 2004, there was a 550 percent increase in deaths from prescription drug overdose in the state, making West Virginia second in the nation for deaths from drug overdose.

Much more must be done to get commonly-abused prescription drugs out of family medicine cabinets, which is exactly the place many young people in West Virginia report going to find drugs to abuse. Seniors in my home state say they fear break-ins to steal prescription medications. And, many West Virginians are understandably reluctant to dispose of drugs themselves out of concern for contaminating the water supply.

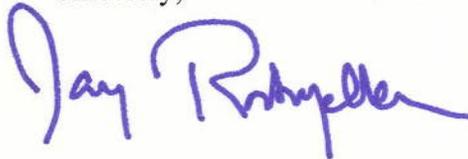
Fortunately, in West Virginia, there are a growing number of local efforts to provide for secure drug take-back boxes in communities around the state. Guidance from your agency regarding the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act would not only complement these ongoing efforts, but it would also provide a framework for even more communities in

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West Virginia and throughout the country to safely dispose of dangerous controlled substance medications.

Again, thank you for your tremendous efforts to combat our nation's growing prescription drug epidemic. I look forward to receiving your response regarding the status of these regulations no later than Monday, November 26, 2012.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jay Rockefeller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jay" and the last name "Rockefeller" clearly legible.

John D. Rockefeller IV

Cc: OMB Deputy Director Jeffrey Zients