**[Your Full Name, Address, Email Address]**

Ex. Ms. Christina Chororos

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**[Date]**

Mr. Donald J. Trump

President of the United States of America

Office of the President

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW

Washington, DC 20500

**[Your State’s Governor]**

Mr. Phil Murphey

New Jersey State Governor

Office of the Governor

PO Box 001

Trenton, NJ 08625

**[Your State’s Senator]**

Mr. Corey Booker

United State Senator for New Jersey

359 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. President, Governor **[Your Governor’s Last Name]** and Senator **[Your Senator’s Last Name],**

I am writing to you with the intent of beginning a dialogue about an epoch-making and apposite subject matter— a subject matter that has legal, moral, and ethical ramifications. A subject matter I hope you, President Trump, you, Governor Murphey and you, Senator Booker, contemplate seriously before creating laws that will greatly harm myself and the millions of Americans that stand in chronic pain with me.

I'm well aware that as government officials, with the highest of clearance and the most accurate up-to-date data on this matter, you don't need to refer to such a civilian article; however, if you'd like to read this or any article cited in this letter, please refer to the footnotes section of each page.

It must comfort millions of family members who currently have an addicted loved one, 1 or worse, have lost an addicted loved one; that the War on Opioids could make it harder or even preventable for cravings to be satiated The notion of restricting, tightening, and perhaps even outlawing pain management physicians, hospitals, and pharmaceutical companies from distributing opioids must help surviving family members feel that their loved ones haven't died in vain. I get this. I *so* get this.

As I’m sure you know, the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) is an annual survey of the civilian noninstitutionalized population of the United States aged twelve years-old or older. The survey is sponsored by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

In 2015, the report estimated that 27.1 million Americans aged twelve or older were current illicit drug users, meaning that they had used an illicit drug during the month prior to the survey interview.2

In 2011, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) reported that 100 million Americans suffer with chronic pain.3 Despite continued debate over the IOM’s findings, even lower estimates exist; like that of the National Pain Report’s research estimating that the number is closer to 39 million Americans who are in chronic pain.6 Regardless of which research you choose to believe, it demonstrates that there are significantly more chronic pain victims than drug users.

It is within these statistics that lies the biggest conundrum.

Which group do you choose to fortify? Does it matter that there are more chronic pain sufferers than addicts in the United States? Can you say one victim is more of a victim than another? One is suffering more than another? One’s plight is greater than the other? One is stronger than the other? Or, frankly, can you say one's life is more important to save than another?

The perspicuous message that has been communicated to the millions of *responsible* chronic pain patients that just so happened to win the ultimate lottery of life—the lottery that doles out unfortunate accidents and diseases and leaves us paralyzed by chronic pain—is that “no one cares”. No one in our government cares about the family members that watch, as their loved ones become a shell of the spirit they once were. No one in CDC or the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) cares about the family members who carry a heart broken into irreplaceable pieces because their loved ones chose to take their own lives rather than live in daily pain.

I can say this, because I currently live in the America referenced above. The America that stigmatizes chronic pain sufferers. Can you imagine being intensely ashamed of taking a medication that alleviates your pain? Would someone with diabetes, also a chronic illness, be ashamed of taking Metformin? Or do asthmatic patients, who fall under the umbrella of a chronic illness, feel a stigma in needing Proventil? In fact, there are only a handful of diseases or illnesses that people are "afraid" of speaking about because the treatment immediately initiates a negative label, a stigma impossible to escape.

**[You may choose to discuss your own story here, or not.]**

I don’t believe for one second that your careers or the decisions you must make are effortless...or painless. I believe it's safe to assume that you agonize over every decision you must make, regardless of the significance or personal relevance. In my last thought, I plead for you to not look at this issue, this platform, as a generalized black-and-white matter that because of its diplomacy will aid in political gain. Rather, I plead for you to look at this issue, this platform, as a matter that is laced with variant shades of gray.

I profoundly commend and sincerely thank you for the work that you do. I am humbled by knowing you have taken the time to read my words and consider my position. I am soberly grateful.

With Much Respect and Gratitude,

**[Insert Your First Name]**

**[Insert Your Full Name]**

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*1.* "Pain." National Institute on Drug Abuse. October 01, 2014. Accessed July 20, 2017. https://www.drugabuse.gov *2. Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*. PDF. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2016.

3. *Relieving Pain in America: A Blueprint for Transforming Prevention, Care, Education, and Research.* Report. Health and Medicine Division, National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, Medicine. June 29, 2011. Accessed July 07, 2017. <http://www.nationalacademies.org>