



March 14, 2005

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

Dear Chairman Enzi and Senator Kennedy:

On behalf of The United States Conference of Mayors (USCM), the National League of Cities (NLC), and the National Association of Counties (NACo), we join with President George Bush in urging your support for early passage of the reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act and for increased CARE Act funding in FY 2006 (including \$725.02 million for Title I and \$236.6 million for Title III). In recognition of the vital role that the CARE Act plays in the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in cities and towns across the nation, USCM passed a resolution last year entitled "Supporting Resources to Fight AIDS in the United States and Around the World." A copy of that resolution is attached to this letter. NACo also has current policy supporting full funding and reauthorization of the CARE Act. NLC's National Municipal Policy calls for increased direct funding to cities through the CARE Act.

While broader access to HIV care, including anti-HIV medications, has helped to lower the rate of AIDS-related deaths, the HIV/AIDS epidemic remains an enormous public health emergency. Nearly one million people in the United States are living with HIV, including more than 405,000 who are living with AIDS—more than at any other time in the epidemic. In addition, more than 40,000 Americans become newly infected with HIV each year and nearly half a million of those living with HIV receive no HIV-related medical care.

Nearly 1 million people with HIV/AIDS are currently living in the United States. The majority of them are relying on the public health and social services provided by our nation's cities, towns and counties. They rely on us for care and treatment, making funding for prevention, early diagnosis, treatment and supportive services critical investments in our health care system.

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.

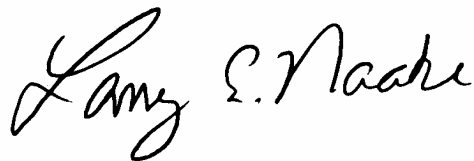
In order to reduce new infections, ensure quality health care, and prolong the lives of persons living with HIV/AIDS, it is essential that the CARE Act be reauthorized and sufficient resources be allocated to cities to address new challenges in the HIV/AIDS epidemic and maintain existing continuum of life-saving care and prevention services.

We thank you for your attention to this important matter and would be happy to answer any questions you might have regarding this request.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of J. Thomas Cochran in black ink.

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

Handwritten signature of Larry Naake in black ink.

Larry Naake
Executive Director
National Association of Counties

Handwritten signature of Donald J. Borut in black ink.

Donald J. Borut
Executive Director
National League of Cities