

**Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (NM-3) Statement for the record on Pallone [CONF\_DAMD\_02]**

The work we are doing today to combat the opioid epidemic is vital. I think everyone here would agree that this is one of the most important things Congress is positioned to accomplish this year.

But as I remarked in my opening statement – as did many of my colleagues – to make this effort meaningful, we need to back this effort with real investments.

The drug crisis has spread and taken hold in communities throughout the country. In my home state, generations of New Mexicans have been impacted, in part because of a failure to make the necessary investments.

All the while, critical programs that help people overcome the influence of abuse have been underfunded and undermined.

No doubt the causes and reasons for the surge in overdose and dependency are many. But ignoring the lack of resources available to our communities, advocacy groups, doctors, and our families and friends is simply unacceptable.

That is why I led an effort, joined by more than 90 of my Democratic colleagues, to introduce the Opioid and Heroin Abuse Crisis Investment Act, which reflects the President's budget request of more than a billion dollars to provide much-needed resources to increase treatment programs.

And, it's why I offered a funding amendment during Energy and Commerce Committee consideration of this package.

Because our work here on this crisis should not underfund important programs.

We should be working together to put the necessary resources behind these bills.

I said in my opening remarks, there were 47,055 lethal drug overdoses in 2014.

That is an average 78 people dying from overdoses every day.

The status quo is unacceptable

Let's address this crisis in a meaningful way.

Let's increase our investment to combat this crisis and pass this amendment to lives.

Thank you.