

Senator Jeff Sessions
Meeting of House and Senate Conferees on S. 524,
Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016
July 6, 2016

I thank my colleagues for their diligent work on this bill, and for the attention they have given to this important issue. As we continue the effort to understand and address the rising heroin and opioid abuse epidemic, I want to mention a few things I think we ought to keep in mind.

According to a January 14, 2016, study published by the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the easy accessibility, reduced price, and high purity of heroin are major drivers of the recent increases in heroin abuse. Strong law enforcement is effective prevention, and we cannot hope to solve drug abuse epidemics until we solve our drug trafficking epidemic and prevent hardened criminals from flooding our streets with illegal drugs in the first place.

Further, prevention remains the best response. This requires a strong and consistent, truthful message that illegal drug use is dangerous and deadly. The anti-drug effort of the 1980's proved the effectiveness of a strong and consistent anti-illegal drug message. Treatment is important but, sadly, represents a difficult effort to undo damage that the drug use has imposed.

Finally, I appreciate the fact that the Conference rejected mandatory spending measures, which would not be appropriate for this type of program that responds to a current crisis.