

Energy and Commerce Committee – Opioid Member Day
October 11, 2017
Testimony of Rep. John J. Faso

Thank you, Chairman Burgess, Ranking Member Green, and members of the committee for holding this important hearing and hosting me today.

I appreciate and understand many of the testimonies we have heard from our colleagues. It is important to note that we represent districts that are extremely different from each other; Democrat, Republican, rural, and urban. It is rare when an issue can unite not only a conference, but an entire Congress. At the risk of speaking for my colleagues, I would like to express that we stand *together* against the opioid epidemic.

My particular district in Upstate New York is fairly rural Mr. Chairman.

When we think of rural America, it evokes images of small towns, diners on the corners, two lane roads framed by family farms, and a community where neighbors look out for each other, and work hard for what they have.

While all of these sentiments ring especially true in my district, so does the opioid crisis.

Our local communities and counties across Upstate are stepping up to the plate and finding ways to address this problem in a manner that meets their needs. With help from the state and federal governments, our local governments and groups facilitate outreach programs, education programs, informational resources, trainings and working groups.

In my district, the Board of Supervisors of Columbia County recently passed an Opioid Epidemic Response Plan. This plan is an enormous step forward in combating the opioid crisis in our region. Twin County Recovery Services is also another institution in my district serving those with addiction through clinical, residential, and educational programs. These initiatives enable local entities to most effectively help those with addiction, educate first responders, prevent future tragedies, and deploy federal and state funding in our communities.

I come before the committee today to implore my colleagues to work with me to empower local governments, that are closest to the crisis, to improve education and prevention programs and fight addiction on the front lines.

Congress must continue to help our local communities by ensuring they have our support through means such as adequately implementing and funding CARA and 21st Century Cures, supporting SAMHSA (*sam-sa*) and passing legislation such as the STOP Act to support our local law enforcement officers by making it more difficult to ship fentanyl and carfentanyl.

I appreciate committee-led initiatives to work in a bipartisan-nature in passing ground-breaking addiction treatment legislation, holding numerous hearings to explore further Congressional action, and remaining open and inclusive during this process.

Our work is far from finished. We must stay engaged with each other, stay engaged with our communities, and stay engaged with the victims to truly, and effectively facilitate an authentic reversal of this dangerous upward trend of opioid addiction.

I stand ready to help the committee in this fight. Thank you.