



January 28, 2014

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Human Services Committee:

I am writing concerning HR 544, a resolution requesting that the Office of Attorney General investigate the proliferation of opioid drugs across the Commonwealth.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is opposed to HR 544 as it is presently written due to the lack of policy balance in the proposed legislation. We believe that this proposal, if enacted, would have a chilling effect on the appropriate and legitimate prescription of and use of opioids in Pennsylvania.

While we realize that there is a problem of misuse, abuse and diversion of prescription opioid analgesics in Pennsylvania and in other parts of the country, there is also the often untold problem of under treatment of pain that cancer patients continue to live with.

Instead, we would like to recommend that a more balanced approach be taken if the Attorney General is asked to investigate this issue; that is, an approach that considers both sides of this complex issue, its scope and any possible remedies.

We support giving law enforcement the means they need to curb the criminal abuse and diversion of these drugs, but at the same time it is important not to make criminals out of law abiding cancer patients and others with moderate to severe pain who rely on the same drugs to make it through their day or night. We know that is not the intent.

The American Cancer Society and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network have experts on this issue who could not be here today, but who would be willing to work with you to achieve a truly balanced solution to this issue. We hope you will take us up on our offer. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Respectfully submitted,

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