

MARY ISAACSON, MEMBER
175TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT
121B EAST WING
P.O. BOX 202175
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2175
(717) 783-8098
FAX: (717) 780-4787

610 N. 2ND STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19123
(215) 503-3245
FAX: (215) 503-7850

MISAACSON@PAHOUSE.NET



House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES
EDUCATION
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES & ENERGY
LIQUOR
POLICY COMMITTEE, VICE CHAIR
CAUCUSES
COMMUNITY COLLEGE, DEMOCRATIC CHAIR
ARTS & CULTURE
AUTISM & INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES
BLUE/GREEN BI-PARTISAN
CLIMATE CAUCUS • DIABETES
EARLY CHILDHOOD • LGBTQ+ EQUALITY
LIFE SCIENCES • MENTAL HEALTH
PARKS & RECREATION
PA SAFE • WOMEN'S HEALTH

August 2, 2021

The Honorable Bryan Cutler
Speaker, Pennsylvania House of Representatives
139 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2100

The Honorable Kerry Benninghoff
Majority Leader, Pennsylvania House of Representatives
110 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2171

Dear Speaker Cutler and Majority Leader Benninghoff:

We write today urging you to call the Pennsylvania House of Representatives back into session before the end of this month to extend the opioid emergency declaration.

The opioid epidemic continues to ravage communities throughout our state. Last year, over 5,000 individuals died in Pennsylvania from overdose—a 16% increase from 2019. Each of those numbers represents a life cut short. Each represents families who will never be whole again.

Our districts include areas of Philadelphia hardest hit by the opioid crisis and substance use disorder. With the onset of the pandemic and the stay-at-home order issued last spring, 2020 is on track to be the worst year on record in Philadelphia for deaths from drug poisonings. Fatal overdoses were up 11% through three quarters, the latest information available, from just over 850 lives lost in 2019 to about 950 last year.

On January 10, 2018, Governor Tom Wolf declared a statewide disaster emergency because of the opioid epidemic, and he has continued to renew it since. He intends to renew this declaration again on August 5, 2021, but, with recent changes to the Pennsylvania Constitution, the renewal will expire on August 26, 2021, unless the Pennsylvania General Assembly votes to extend it.

The opioid emergency declaration has widened access to the prescription drug monitoring program, allowed agencies to share data, and made it easier for individuals to receive treatment. We have seen the positive effects and changed lives across our Districts. We have heard personal testimony that these programs work. It has been vital in our efforts to combat the scourge of opioid addiction. We, as elected representatives, need to do our part in ensuring this emergency declaration does not end prematurely.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Mary Louise Isaacson in cursive.

Mary Isaacson
State Representative
175th Legislative District

Handwritten signature of Joe Hohenstein in cursive.

Joe Hohenstein
State Representative
177th Legislative District