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September 17, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Vote “YES” on H.R. 6, the Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018

Dear Majority Leader McConnell,

On behalf of the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), a national construction trade association representing more than 27,500 firms including America's leading general contractors, specialty contractors, service providers, and suppliers, I strongly urge you to support H.R.6, the Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018, which provides a detailed approach to opioid or substance use disorder prevention, recovery, and treatment.

According to the National Safety Council, drug poisoning is the leading cause of unintentional deaths in the United States. More than 100 individuals die every day from opioid drugs many of which are the result of prescription opioid medicine overdoses. AGC is alarmed by these staggering statistics and recognizes the importance of addressing the growing opioid epidemic because of its threat to the construction industry.

The opioid epidemic creates a significant challenge to recruiting and retaining skilled workers in the construction industry. Currently, the construction industry is facing an unprecedented skilled labor shortage with no end in sight. A recent survey of AGC member companies found that more than 80 percent of respondents faced difficulties filling some or all positions and 81 percent anticipated that the situation will be just as difficult, or more difficult, over the coming year. With most employers adopting drug-free workplace policies, those suffering from an opioid addiction have little to no chance of securing employment. And those workers that do, present a significant risk to themselves, their co-workers and, often, the public. AGC and its member companies place safety in construction as a top priority and the combined effect of these two issues also pose a credible threat to jobsite safety.

H.R. 6 provides a welcome opportunity to reverse the current trend of opioid abuse by increasing the mental health and substance abuse workforce, providing job training and treatment services to individuals in affected communities with substance use disorders, and providing support to individuals in recovery to transition to independent living and the workforce.

AGC strongly urges you to vote “YES” on H.R. 6.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James V. Christianson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James V. Christianson
Vice President, Government Relations