

November 17, 2020

Dear Biden-Harris Transition Team,

It is my pleasure to recommend the Honorable Patrick J. Kennedy for consideration as the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). Congressman Kennedy brings a unique set of both personal and professional experiences that will lead to more informed and empathic policy making. As the first Director of ONDCP in recovery from a substance use disorder in the Obama Administration, I saw firsthand how my own lived experience translated into effective decision making and served as a sense of hopefulness for the millions of Americans affected by substance use. Similarly, Congressman Kennedy can bring those same qualities to the office.

Throughout his career in both state and federal elected positions and through his work as the founder of the Kennedy Forum, Patrick has used his voice and prominence to fiercely advocate for a more robust and compassionate response to the devastating impact of addiction and mental health disorders. He brings a level of credibility and authenticity of a person with lived experience that resonates with all those he encounters and has been a true national champion.

President-elect Biden has made clear that he wants an Administration that reflects the diversity of America. There are an estimated 25 million Americans in recovery who are often underrepresented in high-level federal policy making positions or are there as a matter of chance rather than through a deliberate process. Given the pervasive shame and stigma that still surrounds mental health and substance use disorders and the escalating impact of these concerns as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Patrick would be a valuable asset to the Biden Administration's response and strategy.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance for Mr. Kennedy's candidacy.

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