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October 17, 2014

Senator Patrick Leahy
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Comm.
437 Russell Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Leahy,

I am writing on behalf of Vermont's 11 community recovery centers in St. Johnsbury, Barre, White River, Springfield, Brattleboro, Bennington, Rutland, Middlebury, Burlington, Saint Albans and Morrisville. The center representatives that constitute Vermont Recovery Network understand that Michael Botticelli has been nominated to serve as the permanent Director of ONDCP. We want to express our enthusiastic support for the work Michael Botticelli has done both before and after taking on his new role as the acting Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. We are writing to encourage you and your committee to consider this important nomination favorably and support a prompt confirmation.

Mr. Botticelli's ability to effectively coordinate cross agency policy initiatives is extremely important at this critical juncture in history. His ability to work collaboratively across different sectors of government was demonstrated in Massachusetts where he bridged the cultural divides that separate criminal justice, healthcare, education, interdiction, addiction treatment, and prevention. American justice and healthcare costs continue to increase, driven by untreated addictions. Medical professionals have begun to acknowledge that in order to address the chronic nature of addictive disease, we need to provide ongoing recovery support services as we do with other chronic conditions such as cancer, diabetes, and heart conditions. Until people can be helped to stop using, they'll continue to drive up healthcare and justice costs.

Mr. Botticelli's vision and abilities are currently being directed at curbing these costs. He has been exploring ways to expand the use of programs provided by Vermont's recovery services system. He understands the value of Vermont's Rapid Intervention programs and other addiction related solutions that connect justice programs with treatment and recovery, such as those being developed by Rutland's Vision Project. I know that you are aware of how well these programs are working, but do not know whether you are aware of his efforts toward expanding on these specific Vermont based successes.

Sincerely yours,

Mark A Ames

Coordinator,
Vermont Recovery Network