



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John A. DeFrancisco

## Senate Passes “Good Samaritan” Bill

JOHN A. DEFRANCISCO June 20, 2011

| ISSUE: **CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES**

Senator John A. DeFrancisco (R-I-C, Syracuse) announced that the New York State Senate today passed the “Good Samaritan Bill,” (S4454-B) which would encourage a witness or victim of a drug or alcohol related overdose to save the life of the victim by calling 911 without being punished for drug or alcohol possession.

“Fear of prosecution has become an obstacle in seeking medical care for someone suffering from a drug or alcohol overdose,” said Senator DeFrancisco. This bill would change that by encouraging people to call emergency services when lives are in jeopardy, regardless of their state of mind.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, unintentional drug overdose death rates have risen steadily since 1970. This bill acknowledges that most people who are in need of treatment for an overdose are unable to seek it for themselves, and encourages those who may be with the person to obtain health care for the individual who has overdosed.

“Certainly we should not disregard the seriousness of illegal drug use and overdose, however neither should we subject those who overdose to a death penalty,” continued Senator DeFrancisco, “Action must be taken to encourage proper treatment in these deadly scenarios.”

The bill was crafted with the assistance of the New York State District Attorney's association. There have been overdose instances both locally in Syracuse and on Long Island that led to the proposal for this legislation.

The bill has been sent the Assembly.