



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lee M. Zeldin

Senator Zeldin and the Suffolk County Sober Home Oversight Board Address the State of Sober Homes in Suffolk

LEE M. ZELDIN October 16, 2013

| ISSUE: **AGING, CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES, ALCOHOL, PRESCRIBED DRUGS OR PRESCRIPTIONS, HOUSING**



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Senator Lee M. Zeldin (R-C-I, Shirley), in conjunction with Suffolk County Legislator Kate Browning and the Suffolk County Sober Home Oversight Board, held a successful event

yesterday to examine and discuss the state of Sober Living Homes in Suffolk County.

A sober living home is a place for people enrolled in out-patient treatment or recovering from drug or alcohol addiction to seek safe, affordable, drug and alcohol free environments to promote recovery and encourage self-sufficiency. While there are many sober living homes that fulfill this mission, a bipartisan and multi-governmental assessment has determined that there are far too many sober living home operators in Suffolk County who fail to provide the atmosphere necessary for residents to be successful in this endeavor.

Earlier this year, Senator Zeldin was joined by fellow elected officials and community leaders to announce the introduction of legislation, the [Suffolk Healthy Sober Homes Act \(S. 4697\)](#), to certify, assist, improve and monitor sober living homes operating in Suffolk County.

The event was divided into two segments. The first, being led by Legislator Browning, allowed local providers to speak to the current Request For Qualification (RFQ) process in Suffolk County. Suffolk's RFQ was developed by the Sober Home Oversight Board.

"What's going on today is scary," said local provider, Bertha Griffin, in her testimony to the Board.

In the second segment, led by Senator Zeldin, members of the community illustrated Ms. Griffin's point with first-hand accounts of the dangerous and squalid conditions under which too many of these sober homes operate.

"Listening to the heart wrenching experiences of a mother who has to live with the pain of losing her son to one of these homes, a young woman physically and mentally scarred by her time in these derelict residences, and the accounts from community advocates of the inhumane treatment of countless residents, speak volumes to the necessity of our

legislation,” said Senator Zeldin. “While many are operating high quality homes, it is clear from these stories that there are still far too many bad actors running homes in our county.”

“It’s a problem, like cancer, that goes through a community,” said Brookhaven Town Councilman Dan Panico, during the event.

Senator Zeldin concluded the event saying, “I was encouraged by the participation of Senator Phil Boyle, Assemblyman Fred Thiele and the office of Senator Ken LaValle. It is my hope that with their continued support, we will see the Suffolk Healthy Sober Homes Act pass both houses in the next Legislative Session, for the benefit of all of our shared communities.”