



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senate Passes Senator Martins' Legislation Strengthening Penalties for Dealing Drugs to Children

JACK M. MARTINS March 5, 2014

| ISSUE: **CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES**

Senator Jack Martins (R-Mineola) today announced that the New York State Senate has passed legislation he sponsors to strengthen penalties for criminals who deal drugs to children.

“Drugs destroy lives, and the victims of drug abuse are getting younger and younger. Drug use among children, especially heroin, is a growing epidemic on Long Island. Criminals who target young children and poison them with heroin and other controlled substances deserve tougher penalties. This legislation will give law enforcement another tool to keep these drug dealers off the streets and behind bars where they belong,” said Senator Martins.

Under current law, anyone over the age of 21 who sells a controlled substance to a minor under the age of 17 can be charged with a class B felony. However, the law does not contain an enhanced penalty for selling a controlled substance to younger children.

Senator Martins' legislation (S988A) would create the new crime of criminal sale of a controlled substance to a child in the first degree. Under the proposed law, adults over the age 18 who sell a controlled substance to a minor under the age of 14 would be charged with a class A-II felony.

A January 25, 2014 Newsday report noted that treatment for heroin addiction has increased roughly fourfold on Long Island since 2011, and that children are turning to drugs at a younger age. The article also noted that Suffolk County treatment experts recently treated a 13 year old girl for heroin addiction.