



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senate Passes Senator Martins' Legislation to Address Long Island's Growing Heroin Epidemic

JACK M. MARTINS June 10, 2014

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Legislation Would Give Parents New Options to Get Treatment for their Children & Increase Education for Teens

Senator Jack M. Martins (R-Mineola) announced that the New York State Senate has passed legislation he sponsored to address the growing heroin epidemic on Long Island and throughout New York State. The bills would give parents new resources to get treatment for their children and increase education for teens about the dangers of heroin and drug abuse.

“Every community in the State is being affected by the growing heroin epidemic, and children are the number one target. Heroin is so dangerous and deadly that children can become addicts after using it just once. Giving parents new tools to get their children into treatment, before it's too late, and increasing education about the dangers of this drug will help save lives and prevent tragedies in our communities,” said Senator Martins.

S7652A would allow parents to petition a Family Court to require their child to be placed into a substance abuse treatment services program for up to 60 days. The Court could require the child to stay in treatment for up to an additional 90 days if recommended by the treatment provider. This request would be filed similar to those for a Person In Need of Supervision (PINS) petition.

Parents do not have this ability under current law; children can check themselves out of a rehab program, unless they have been ordered to complete the program by the courts. As a result, the only tool parents have to get their child into rehab and prevent them from checking out is by having them arrested. This puts parents in the terrible position of having to saddle their child with a criminal record in order to get them the help they need.

S7653 would require that all students receive proper instruction regarding heroin and opiate/opioid drug use as part of the existing drug prevention program they receive in school. This would help reinforce the dangers of using these substances and ensure that students fully comprehend the addictive and dangerous nature of heroin and opiates/opioids.

Heroin related deaths have reached an all-time high on Long Island. There were approximately 240 heroin related deaths over the last two years on Long Island. Additionally, the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency (LICADD) has seen the number of individuals in treatment increase from just under 100 families a month for treatment in 2009 to more than 850 a month in 2014. According to LICADD, 80 percent of that increase is due to opiate and heroin addiction.

The legislation was developed based on input from treatment providers, law enforcement, parents, and concerned residents at hearings held by the Senate's Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Abuse. Senator Martins served on the Task Force.