



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins: “Steven Kovacs Law” Passed by State Legislature

JACK M. MARTINS June 19, 2014

First in the Nation Law Would Require Homeowners to Get Help for Individuals Who Have a Medical Emergency in Their Home

Senator Jack M. Martins (R-Mineola) has announced that the New York State Senate and Assembly have passed “Steven Kovacs Law,” to help ensure that individuals get the help they need in a medical emergency. The legislation would require homeowners to try and get help if someone overdoses or has a medical emergency in their home.

The legislation is named after Steven Kovacs, a Jericho native who became addicted to prescription drugs as study aids while at college. Steven accidentally overdosed in a home following a social gathering, but four adults in the home did nothing to help him, instead leaving him for over five hours as he lay dying, gasping for breath.

“It’s very simple; if you don’t do the morally responsible thing and take the commonsense step to call for help when someone is having a medical emergency in your home, then you should be held liable. Steven Kovacs lost his life because the people he was with didn’t do the right thing and call for help while he lay dying. That should never, ever happen again. This legislation will help save lives, and Governor Cuomo should sign it when it reaches his desk,” said Senator Martins.

“I am incredibly grateful to Senator Martins for his work to get this legislation passed. He is a man of his word; he promised me he would do everything he could to get Steven Kovacs Law passed and that’s exactly what he did. Steven’s legacy is helping people; he made a difference for so many in lives, and this would allow him to continue doing that in spirit. Thank you to Senator Martins, Assemblyman Abate, and everyone who worked with us to make this a reality. Now we need Governor Cuomo to sign it,” said Steven’s mother, Joni Kovacs-Howe.

"Steven Kovacs" law would require an adult who is hosting a gathering at a private residence to call 911 or render medical assistance if they know one of their guests is having a medical emergency. Those who fail to get help for someone they know is having a medical emergency would face civil liability. Assemblyman Peter J. Abate, Jr. (D-Brooklyn) sponsored the legislation in the Assembly.

"With overdose rates at record levels, this bill re-emphasizes the dire importance of calling for help in the midst of a medical emergency. We know of many stories where young people have been left alone as friends scatter, resulting in a fatality that potentially could have been prevented with timely medical care. We thank Senator Martins for his leadership on this issue and of course, appreciate Joni Kovacs' tireless fight in her son's memory," said Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds, Executive Director of the Long Island Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence (LICADD).

This proposed law is believed to be the first such law anywhere in the country.

The legislation will be sent to Governor Cuomo for consideration.