



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

## Senate Passes Measures to Prevent Drug Use in New York Communities

DEAN G. SKELOS March 10, 2015

### Bills Would Strengthen Penalties for Meth-Related Crimes and Prevent Use of Parks or Playgrounds for Drug Activity

The New York State Senate today passed two drug prevention bills to combat the spread of methamphetamine use in New York and to stop parks and playgrounds from being used by drug dealers.

Bill (S1150), sponsored by Senator Tom O'Mara (R-C, Big Flats), would deter the growing use of methamphetamine in New York by strengthening penalties for the sale and possession of meth and make them consistent with penalties for crimes involving heroin and cocaine.

Senator Skelos said, "When illegal drugs take hold of a community, everyone suffers. The important measures passed by the Senate today would help curb drug abuse throughout the state by tackling the spread of methamphetamine use and help put a stop to dealers who use a park or playground setting to lure children to drugs."

Senator O'Mara said, "We need to ensure that our laws are keeping pace with the goal of putting meth manufacturers and sellers out of business in New York State. We've seen a troubling increase over the past few years in the production, sale and use of meth, and we

should heed the warning signs. Law enforcement officers statewide continue to do outstanding work on public awareness, education, and protection. We're hopeful that tougher anti-meth laws will act as a stronger deterrent among our young people at risk of falling prey to this cycle of addiction and tragedy.”

Domestic meth availability is at a five-year high and is likely the result of increasing large-scale production in Mexico and small-scale production in the United States. While meth has been traditionally associated with western and southern regions of the country, its influence, sale, and possession are moving steadily towards the East Coast. By implementing stricter anti-meth laws, the bill would align New York with similar measures in the neighboring states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Massachusetts.

In addition, the Senate passed legislation that aims to keep children safe while at parks and playgrounds. The bill (S994), sponsored by Senator Martin Golden (R-I-C, Brooklyn), would increase penalties for people who sell drugs in playgrounds and parks, protecting children and their families from the dangers of drug dealers.

Senator Golden said, “Parks and playgrounds should be about swings, slides and fields, not drugs. This legislation will better protect our children from drug dealers especially in places where they are supposed to be safe. Stricter laws are on the books to reduce the presence of drugs in school zones, and today, the Senate has approved this bill that would similarly guard parks and playgrounds. We must advance these laws, in the wake of the prescription drug and heroin crisis throughout our city and state, to keep drugs away from our children.”

This measure expands upon current New York State law, which penalizes people who sell drugs on school grounds or day-care centers, to include parks and playgrounds that may not be attached to schools. The bill would help law enforcement prosecute drug dealers who use parks and playgrounds in an effort to target children.

The bills will be sent to the Assembly.