



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Senate Passes Griffo Bill to Provide Emergency Access to Medical Marijuana

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO June 16, 2015

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ALBANY – The New York State Senate on Monday passed legislation authored by Senator Joseph Griffo that would help certain critically ill patients obtain emergency access to medical marijuana.

While the state’s Compassionate Care Medical Marijuana Program is set to begin early next year, Sen. Griffo’s bill ([S5086](#)) – which has already passed in the Assembly – would help provide more immediate relief to children and patients who are suffering from serious life-threatening forms of epilepsy and other conditions. Since the Medical Marijuana Program was first approved last summer, not one patient has received medical marijuana and at least four children who might have benefited from such relief have died.

The bill – which was also sponsored by Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, chairman of the Assembly Health Committee – will now be sent to the Governor for his approval.

In Senator Griffo’s district, 12-year-old Mackenzie Kulawy of New York Mills suffers from a severe form of epilepsy that threatens her health with seizures every day. It is heartbreaking, Griffo said, to think that the lives of children like Mackenzie, and other patients suffering from progressive, degenerative or life-threatening illnesses, are further put at risk by

delaying treatment that could potentially lessen their pain.

“Now that the medical marijuana program is state law, every day we wait to offer the opportunity for long-awaited relief is one more day that a critically ill child or adult has to endure needless suffering,” said Griffo, R-Rome. “We should make our best efforts to provide potential relief for their suffering now, not next year. The chance to live a normal life, free of severe pain and free of frequent seizures, would mean the world to these children and their families.”

Griffo’s bill proposes a temporary process to expedite emergency access for medical marijuana to a select group of people.

Griffo added, “I am pleased that my Senate colleagues have chosen to join the Assembly in doing the right thing, and I wholeheartedly urge the Governor to do whatever is in his power to immediately end this wait for medical marijuana in the most severe cases.”

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