



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

## Senator Martins: Tougher Penalties for Dealing Drugs to Children Passed By Senate

JACK M. MARTINS March 1, 2016

| ISSUE: **DRUGS**

Senator Jack M. Martins (R-7th Senate District) announced that the New York State Senate passed legislation he sponsored to strengthen penalties for dealing drugs to children.

The legislation (S208) would create the new class A-II felony crime of “criminal sale of a controlled substance to a child in the first degree” for adults over age 18 who sell drugs to a minor under the age of 14. Individuals convicted of the crime would face a maximum penalty of up to 10 years in prison and lifetime probation following release from jail. Adults over age 21 who sell drugs to children between the ages of 14 and 17 would be guilty of “criminal sale of a controlled substance to a child in the second degree” a class B felony punishable by up to 9 years in prison.

“Adults who sell dangerous, illegal drugs to young children are predators, plain and simple. They’re targeting them and selling them poison, trying to get them addicted in order to make money. Right now, every community in New York State is battling a heroin and opioid epidemic; here in Nassau County, heroin related deaths reached record levels last year. Giving law enforcement stronger tools to take the dealers who are poisoning our kids off the streets and out of our communities is a necessary step to combat this epidemic. I hope the

Assembly will join the Senate in passing this important legislation,” said Senator Martins.

Current law does not contain any enhanced penalties for dealing drugs to children under the age of 14.

“Illegal drugs, such as heroin and cocaine, are destroying neighborhoods and families all throughout this country. No one is immune to the dangers and tragedies that all illegal drugs cause. Selling or giving illegal narcotics creates this problem and allows it to exist. This is bad enough but, when an adult sells them to our children, they are poisoning our neighborhoods even worse. Adults should be warning kids to stay away from drugs, not distributing them to our most vulnerable part of our society, which are the children. It’s not only illegal, it’s also completely immoral to take advantage of a child. We applaud Senator Martins for putting our kids first by recognizing this criminal assault on our nation’s children and by having the courage to pass legislation mandating a serious penalty to match a serious crime,” said Pete Paterson, New York State Association of PBAs (NYSAPBA) Legislative Chairman and First Vice President of the Nassau County PBA.

"We need every tool at our disposal if we are to gain ground in our efforts to combat the heroin crisis on Long Island and across New York State. Those who sell drugs - especially to children - or use minors as 'drug runners' should be punished swiftly and severely. This measure modernizes the penal code to better reflect the devastating impact these dealers are having on our families and communities and sends a message that such acts won't be tolerated. We commend Senator Martins for his continued leadership in addressing addiction and hope this bill becomes law," said Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds, President & CEO of Family and Children’s Association, a not-for-profit social service agency serving nearly 20,000 individuals throughout Long Island each year.