



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Amedore

## Senator Amedore Announces Passage of “Laree's Law”

GEORGE AMEDORE June 13, 2017



Senator George Amedore, co-Chair of the Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, announced the Senate has passed Laree’s Law, which would allow law enforcement officials to charge a drug dealer with homicide if a person overdoses on heroin or an opiate-controlled substance sold to them by that dealer. The bill (S.2761) carries a penalty of 15-25 years in prison, and was passed as part of a larger package of legislation aimed at combating the heroin epidemic.

Laree’s Law is named after Laree Farrell Lincoln, a Colonie teenager who died of a heroin

overdose in 2013.

“New York State has made great progress when it comes to the fight against the heroin crisis we are facing in our communities, but there is more work to be done. We need to take on the heroin epidemic from all sides. We need prevention, proper treatment and support for those in recovery, and we need to properly punish those that are bringing these deadly drug onto our streets,” said Senator George Amedore.

The legislation is intended to target mid to high level drug dealers who profit from heroin sales, and includes a “co-user” carve out. In 2011, New York adopted a “Good Samaritan” law to shield individuals from charges related to an overdose if they attempt to help the individual and report the incident in a timely manner.

In addition to Laree’s Law, the Senate also passed a package of bills today that will build upon existing measures by focusing on enforcement to hold drug dealers more accountable, improve regulation of synthetic opioids, further protect children, and improve the state’s treatment programs to help assist individuals with recovery, among other measures. Today’s package builds upon action already taken this session, such as the \$214 million the Senate Task Force secured in this year’s budget. This record-high level of funding will help improve prevention, treatment, recovery and education services across the state.

**Strengthening Enforcement:**

Creating Drug Free Zones Around Drug or Alcohol Treatment Centers: Bill S1127, sponsored by Senator Akshar, would criminalize the sale of a controlled substance on the grounds of a drug or alcohol treatment center, or within 1,000 feet of such facilities. Statistics show that drug dealers often prey on individuals with addictions by sitting in the immediate vicinity of

a drug or alcohol treatment center or methadone clinic waiting for people to come out so they can sell them drugs.

Establishing New Penalties for Heroin Sales: Bill S880, sponsored by Senator Robert Ortt (R-C-I, North Tonawanda), would create appropriate level penalties as it relates to heroin sales, taking into account the lighter weight of heroin. Heroin weighs less than other drugs and therefore more doses of heroin are needed to trigger various criminal offenses.

Making it Easier to Prosecute Heroin Dealers: Bill S638, sponsored by Senator Phil Boyle (R-C-I, Bay Shore), would assist in the prosecution of heroin dealers by creating a presumption that the possession of 50 or more individual packages containing heroin and/or having an aggregate value of \$300 is possession with intent to sell. Currently, dealers can carry large quantities of the drug before triggering a felony charge of possession.

Cracking Down on Black Market Prescription Drugs: Bill S2814, sponsored by Senator Kemp Hannon (R, Nassau), would establish the offense of fraudulent prescription, dispensing and procurement of non-controlled substance prescription medications and devices, and establish the offense of unlawful possession of non-controlled substance prescription medications and devices. The gaps in existing law and the growth of a black market make it self-evident that change is necessary. This bill will address the problem by increasing or establishing criminal penalties that better fit these crimes.

### **Prohibiting Dangerous Synthetic Drugs:**

Improving the Regulation of Fentanyl: Bill S5884, sponsored by Senator Jacobs, adds six new derivatives of fentanyl to the controlled substance schedule regulated by the state Department of Health. Fentanyl and fentanyl-combined drugs are a major driver of the many recent overdoses that have occurred across New York State. It is vital for public health and safety to properly regulate this potent drug.

Cracking Down on The Sale of Carfentanil: Bill S623, sponsored by Senator Boyle, would make the sale of 2 milligrams or more of Carfentanil a Class A-II felony and the sale of 10 milligrams or more of Carfentanil a Class A-I felony. Carfentanil is synthetic opioid and a schedule II controlled substance, which is 100 times deadlier than fentanyl, and 10,000 times stronger than morphine.

Conforming State Controlled Substances With Federal Schedules: Bill S5357, sponsored by Senator Hannon, updates the state controlled substances schedules, promoting consistency with the federal schedules and promoting health and safety. Consistency between the state and federal schedules is important to address the prevalence of abuse and misuse of controlled substances. The bill would also add other known dangerous substances to the state's schedule of controlled substances, including a synthetic opioid analgesic, often is known as AH-7921, which can cause a deadly psychoactive reaction.

### **Protecting Children from Drug Abuse:**

Toughening Penalties for Sale of a Controlled Substance to Minors: Bill S3845, sponsored by Senator Kathy Marchione (R-C-I-Reform, Halfmoon), would help curb rising drug abuse among high school students and other youth by making the sale of a controlled substance by an adult to a minor under the age of 14 a class A-II felony.

Limiting Children's Opioid Exposure: Bill S5949, sponsored by Senator Akshar, helps address the increasing risk of children becoming addicted to opioids and heroin after being prescribed pain-killers for medical procedures or illegally sharing extra prescriptions. The bill requires a health practitioner to receive written consent from a minor's parent or legal guardian in order to prescribe a medical treatment containing opioids, as well as to discuss the risks of addiction and dangers of overdose associated with the medication. The bill also limits the prescription for a controlled substance containing an opioid to a seven-day

duration unless there is a medical emergency that puts the child's health or safety at risk.

### **Preventing Addiction and Facilitating Successful Recoveries:**

Requiring Patient Counseling Prior to Issuing a Prescription for a Schedule II Opioid: Bill S5670, sponsored by Senator Akshar, requires health care practitioners to consult with a patient regarding the quantity of an opioid prescription and the patient's option to have the prescription written for a lower quantity. The physician must also inform the patient of the risks associated with taking an opiate medication, and the reason for issuing the medication must be documented in the patient's medical record.

Preventing Predatory and Deceptive Substance Abuse Treatment: Bill S6544, sponsored by Senator Akshar, makes it a crime to offer to or accept any kickback from an individual or entity that provides substance abuse services in exchange for patient referral and admission. There has been a rise in individuals who aggressively pursue people in need of substance use disorder treatment services and, for a sometimes-extravagant fee, promise admission to treatment programs. For individuals engaging in this predatory behavior, the most desirable patients are those with robust insurance coverage, and out-of-network benefit packages. Patient brokers refer these clients to programs offering the highest rate of "return" to the patient broker, with little or no regard for the patient's specific needs. This predatory practice capitalizes on, and exploits, families' fears while putting patients at risk of inappropriate treatment.

Expanding Access to Funding for State Substance Abuse Services: Bill S898, sponsored by Senator Amedore, authorizes the state Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) to provide funding to substance use disorder and/or compulsive gambling programs operated by for profit agencies. Current statute states all funds issued by OASAS to provide addiction prevention, treatment and recovery services must be awarded to non-profit

providers. For-profit organizations, which provide similar services are unable to apply for state contracts through OASAS and such restrictions limits competition within the RFP process that would ensure state dollars are being used in the most efficient way possible.

Making the State's Peer Engagement Program Permanent: Bill S6509, sponsored by Senator Jacobs, would codify the state's Peer Engagement program. It provides participant-centered peer-to-peer services that emphasize knowledge and wisdom through lived experiences in which peers are encouraged to share first-hand knowledge of substance abuse, addiction, and recovery to support the recovery goals of individuals who use drugs and/or alcohol. Peer Engagement Specialists coordinate with hospital emergency department personnel to help addicts who have undergone an opioid overdose reversal, or after discharge from another substance abuse-related emergency visit to connect with addiction treatment services. This bill also requires additional coordination between peer engagement specialists and police, fire, or other first responder departments in connecting individuals receiving an opioid overdose reversal with treatment services.