



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elaine Phillips

Senator Phillips Announces Senate Passes ‘Laree’s Law’ To Hold Drug Dealers Accountable For Overdose Deaths

ELAINE PHILLIPS March 21, 2018



Senator Elaine Phillips announced today that the New York State Senate passed “Laree’s Law,” which she sponsored, to strengthen enforcement and combat growing drug abuse. The bill (S2761) would allow law enforcement officials to charge a drug dealer with homicide if a death results from the sale of heroin or an opiate controlled substance.

“With the heroin and opioid crisis ravaging communities across Long Island, this legislation will provide law enforcement with another tool to combat this epidemic,” Senator Phillips

said. “We must continue to provide treatment providers, addiction specialists and law enforcement with the necessary resources they need. While we have made some progress with legislation and crucial funding, it is imperative that we continue to fight this problem as a community alongside those most in need.”

Currently, a person who provides an illicit drug that results in the death of a user can typically only be charged with the criminal sale of a controlled substance. As a result, those involved in the illicit drug trade can escape prosecution for the death they caused. Laree’s Law is named in honor of Laree Farrell Lincoln, an Albany County teenager who died of a heroin overdose in 2013 and whose mother, Patty Farrell, has been a strong advocate for holding drug dealers accountable for the true cost of their crimes.

This legislation is intended to target mid- to high-level drug dealers who profit from heroin sales, but does not punish co-users by providing a defense for those who bought and used the opiate with the deceased. New York State’s “Good Samaritan Law,” also shields individuals from charges related to an overdose if they attempt to help the individual and report the incident in a timely manner.

Laree’s Law is part of the Senate’s ongoing commitment to combat the heroin and opioid epidemic. In the Senate’s budget resolution passed last week, record funding of \$265 million was included and will continue to be a priority in ongoing budget negotiations to help improve prevention, treatment, recovery and education services across the state.

The bill has been sent to the Assembly.