



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elaine Phillips

## Senator Phillips Announces New York Senate Passes The 'Drug Take Back Act' To Prevent Unused Drugs From Feeding Addictions And Harming The Environment

ELAINE PHILLIPS April 25, 2018

# DRUG TAKE BACK PROGRAM



Senator Elaine Phillips announced today that the New York State Senate passed the “Drug Take Back Act,” which she co-sponsored, that helps prevent opioids or other unused prescriptions from being abused and protects water supplies from improper disposal.

“Families on Long Island, and across New York State, are struggling with the devastation and heartbreak caused by our heroin and opioid crisis,” Senator Phillips said. “This measure not

only helps prevent dangerous prescription medications from being abused, but provides another tool in the collaborative fight to end this epidemic. Increasing proper disposal methods will also protect our environment by curbing the amount of medication flushed into our sole-source of drinking water. I am proud to be a co-sponsor and I applaud my colleagues for passing this measure.”

The bill, S7354, would provide significantly more opportunities for New Yorkers to ensure the safe disposal of unused drugs by establishing a new statewide pharmaceutical drug take-back program.

Last year, Governor Cuomo vetoed a bill (S6750) that would have helped expand existing drug take-back efforts, stop more opioids from getting into the hands of abusers, and prevent the contamination of the environment. This new bill was introduced to create a unified, statewide drug take-back program that saves taxpayer money spent on programs currently operated by law enforcement agencies and public officials and helps reduce medication misuse and improper disposal.

The Drug Take Back Act holds pharmaceutical manufacturers responsible for all costs of the take-back program, ranging from public education and awareness to drug collection, transport, and destruction. The Act further requires chain pharmacies and mail-order pharmacies to provide consumers with collection options including drop boxes and prepaid mail-back envelopes.

Opioid addictions are known to start when individuals access leftover prescriptions found at home in medicine cabinets. By giving New Yorkers more opportunities to find ways to properly dispose of unused drugs, the potential for abuse and addiction is decreased. In addition, proper disposal helps protect the state’s water supplies because fewer people would

improperly dispose of drugs by flushing them down a toilet or using other means that result in water contamination and negative impacts to aquatic life. Last year, New York made a historic \$2.5 billion investment in improving and protecting water resources, and keeping drugs out of water supplies is another important and necessary step. This measure was also included in the Senate's one-house budget proposal passed earlier this year.

The Senate today passed another bill, S6673, which Senator Phillips co-sponsored, that requires the state Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation to create, maintain, and regularly update a statewide web-based listing of prescription drug disposal sites, events, and other disposal options for consumers. The site would be searchable by zip code so New Yorkers can find a site closest to them when they need to get rid of prescriptions or other drugs in their homes.

"Creating a searchable database for disposal sites and events ensures New Yorkers have the resources to dispose of unused medications," Senator Phillips said. "The option to properly dispose of drugs should be readily available to all New Yorkers – and this measure does just that."

The bills were sent to the Assembly.