



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elaine Phillips

Senator Phillips Announces 'Drug Take Back Act' Signed Into State Law

ELAINE PHILLIPS July 11, 2018



DRUG TAKE BACK ACT

Senator Elaine Phillips announced today that the “Drug Take Back Act,” which she co-sponsored, was signed into state law. The measure establishes a unified statewide drug take-back program that will reduce medication misuse, and save government and taxpayer money. The bill will also protect the state’s water supplies by preventing drugs from being improperly disposed of by flushing or other means that result in contamination of water bodies and negatively impact aquatic life.

“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 am pleased the measure is now state law.”

Senator Phillips has hosted numerous “Shed the Meds” programs throughout the 7th Senate District and has collected and properly disposed of over 800 pounds of unwanted drugs.

Last year, Governor Cuomo vetoed a bill S.6750 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. In response, the Senate Majority successfully led the effort this year to create a unified, statewide drug take-back program that saves taxpayers the 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 will help give manufacturers of pharmaceutical products responsibility for costs of the take-back program, with focal points being public education and awareness, as well as drug collection, transport, and destruction. Under this new law, chain and mail-order pharmacies will be required to provide consumers with collection options, including drop boxes and prepaid mail-back envelopes. The measure will also ensure rural, urban, and other underserved communities have access to ongoing collection services so that all persons have reasonable access to locations to dispose of their drugs and prevent over-saturation in higher populated areas.

The new law is critical to the state’s ongoing efforts to reduce drug abuse because one of the most common ways for opioid addictions to start is when individuals have access to leftover

prescriptions, whether it be theirs, a friend's, a relative's, or someone else's. By increasing New Yorkers' opportunities 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. Last year, the Senate led the way in securing a historic \$2.5 billion investment to improve and protect water resources, and keeping drugs out of water supplies is another important and necessary step.