



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Anthony H. Palumbo

Palumbo: State Must Increase Penalties for Fentanyl Dealers

ANTHONY H. PALUMBO July 25, 2024



A recent editorial in Newsday “Fentanyl tragedy continues on LI” highlighted the recent sentencing of a local drug dealer whose fentanyl-laced drugs led to several deaths and overdoses on the East End of Long Island. The Newsday editorial board wrote that the punishment was too lenient. I agree. What was missing from this editorial is the fact that a solution does exist and was pushed for in Albany. My colleagues and I have been fighting for my legislation to increase penalties in New York for drug dealers who knowingly lace drugs with fentanyl that kills. Unfortunately, even with the backing of many in the legislature, victims’ families and our Suffolk County District Attorney, the Leadership in the Legislature

refused to move this bill to the floor for a vote.

In January of this year, I joined Suffolk County District Attorney Ray Tierney, members of Suffolk County law enforcement and crime victims' advocates to promote a package of bipartisan legislation to combat the fentanyl epidemic. My bill, Chelsey's Law (S.7790), is named after Chelsey Murray, a 31-year-old Suffolk County resident who fatally overdosed in August 2022 on fentanyl poisoning that was traced back to her supplier. Chelsey's Law will increase penalties for individuals who knew or had reasonable grounds to know that the narcotics they sold were laced with fentanyl. These individuals are death dealers, and the punishment should match the severity of their crimes.

The fentanyl epidemic has impacted every corner of our state and every segment of society. It doesn't discriminate. It has taken both young and old, rich and poor. Time is a luxury we no longer have when addressing this issue.

I applaud the region's law enforcement, the Suffolk County District Attorney's office and our local non-profits for their heroic efforts in battling fentanyl, but it's long past due for the Democrat controlled Senate and Assembly to act. This is not a partisan issue this is a common sense approach that can save lives. Increasing penalties on fentanyl dealers is not the only solution when addressing this crisis, but one that must be part of a comprehensive strategy in combating an epidemic that has devastated so many families and stolen the promise and future of countless New Yorkers. I am hopeful that the Newsday Editorial Board will support our efforts in the 2025 Legislative Session and help to garner support for these critically important measures.

Senator Anthony Palumbo is the Ranking Republican member of the State Senate's Codes and Judiciary Committees.