



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Senator Kennedy Announces Actions Taken to Advance Fight Against Prescription Drug Abuse

Timothy M. Kennedy

February 13, 2012

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Albany forum brings various perspectives together, Legislation against Rx abuse passes Senate.

ALBANY, N.Y. – Senator Timothy M. Kennedy, D-58th District, announced that progress is being made in the fight against prescription drug abuse. At the State Capitol Monday morning, a roundtable forum brought various perspectives together to discuss actions that must be taken to address the growing epidemic. Later in the day, the Senate passed legislation to crackdown on drug dealers and pill mills.

Several local advocates made the trip to Albany to participate in the joint legislative roundtable on New York's prescription drug abuse epidemic – which was called by Senator Kemp Hannon, chairman of the Health Committee, and Senator Jeffrey Klein, chairman of the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Committee.

Avi and Julie Israel, who founded advocacy group “[Save the Michaels of the World](#)”, testified before the panel to share the story of their son, [Michael David Israel](#), who took his own life after battling prescription drug addiction. Suzanne and Mark Crotty also attended the forum and met with key lawmakers to discuss the tragedy their family suffered when their son [Zach Crotty](#) overdosed on prescription pills.

Representatives from doctors groups, pharmacies, addiction treatment, the Attorney General's Office and the Health Department also participated in the roundtable to voice their thoughts on the drug abuse crisis and necessary actions to address it.

“Far too many families have endured tragedies as a result of prescription drug addiction. It’s absolutely urgent that we address this issue this year,” said Senator Kennedy. “At the roundtable forum, we had a very productive conversation about New York’s growing epidemic of prescription drug abuse and the urgent actions we must take to combat it. Momentum is building on this issue, and we can’t let up now. We need to fight this crisis before it takes another life.”

Follow this link to watch video of Senator Kennedy discussing prescription drug abuse at the roundtable forum: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhOkqH_ZmGU. Video of Avi Israel’s testimony before the panel is available here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIWxL3iHSsk>. Full video of the entire roundtable forum here: <http://www.nysenate.gov/event/2012/feb/13/new-york-s-prescription-drug-abuse-crisis>.

The Senate passed legislation Monday to fill a gap in the law relating to doctors or pharmacists that operate pill mills. The bill ([S.6066](#)), once it passes the Assembly and is signed by the Governor, would establish a class B felony of criminal sale of a controlled substance by a practitioner or pharmacist. The legislation will crackdown on practitioners or pharmacists who operate pill mills or fill prescriptions for controlled substances other than in the good faith of their practice.

Senator Kennedy joined his colleagues in passing a bill ([S.5880A](#)) that would strengthen penalties against drug dealers who sell hydrocodone. The Senate also passed legislation ([S.3210B](#)) to crackdown on dealers who prey on minors. The bill would establish the crime of criminal sale of a controlled substance to a child in the first degree, making the sale of a controlled substance by an adult to a minor under the age of 14 a class A-II felony.

Senator Kennedy continues to push for four pieces of legislation, which are titled the “Michael David Israel Laws”. Together, with the Attorney General’s I-STOP legislation, these bills represent a comprehensive approach to address prescription drug abuse. The “Michael David Israel Laws” include:

- Patient Information Act ([S.6179/A. 9097](#)): Requires disclosure of addiction risks for certain prescription drugs; requires physicians, nurses and pharmacists to provide information on prevention, mitigation and treatment of prescription drug addiction.

- Physician Training Law ([S.6180/S.9102](#)): Relates to continuing medical education requirements for doctors, nurses and pharmacists; requires three hours of training on the prevention, treatment and mitigation of opiate analgesics and psychotropic drug addiction.
- Addiction Transition Law ([S.6181/A.9093](#)): Requires the Department of Health to draft guidelines for the transition of patients from substances with a high risk of addiction to those with a low risk.
- Controlled Substance Registry Reform Act ([S.5049A/A.9121](#)): Requires practitioners to check the controlled substance abuse registry before prescribing painkillers and directs the commissioner of public health to establish an enforcement system.

This legislative package is being carried in the Assembly by Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples-Stokes.

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Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate's 58th District, which is comprised of the towns of Cheektowaga, Eden, Hamburg and West Seneca, the city of Lackawanna and parts of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.