



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo, Task Force Members Release Report and Legislative Recommendations Regarding Heroin & Opioid Addiction

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO May 28, 2014

| ISSUE: **CRIME, CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES, DRUGS, PRESCRIBED DRUGS OR PRESCRIPTIONS, COURTS**



ALBANY – Sen. Joseph A. Griffo today joined his colleagues on the Senate Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction to release a report that summarizes findings from statewide forums on drug addiction, treatment and crime. The report includes 25 bills that the Senate is expected to address before it recesses for the summer.

“Our task force has put together a comprehensive package that addresses many of the problems I heard about from addiction treatment and law enforcement experts during the forum I hosted,” said Griffo, R-Rome. “These bills would stop addiction before it starts by better educating the public, especially teenagers, about the risks of heroin; preventing overdoses by arming people with naloxone; making the treatment more affordable and available when needed; and helping us get tough on dealers and traffickers. We’ve had great success in curbing prescription abuse through the I-STOP program. It’s my hope that this legislation will stem the flow of heroin and other opioids through the Empire State.”

Task force members held 18 forums statewide, including an April 15 forum in Utica hosted by Senator Griffo. Parents told harrowing stories about loved ones addicted to opioids and the difficulty in receiving critical treatment. Law enforcement officials testified that they needed stronger tools to prevent criminals from putting more deadly drugs on the streets. Treatment and medical professionals urged lawmakers to treat opioid addiction as a disease, and to make treatment more readily and widely available. Prevention groups and educators focused on eliminating the stigma associated with addiction and supported the creation of more programs to inform the public about the dangers of substance abuse. Recovering addicts advocated for more treatment options, more beds, and more recovery time.

Senator Phil Boyle, R-Bay Shore, is the chairman of the task force. It also includes Sen. Griffo’s geographical neighbors: Sen. Betty Little, R-Queensbury, Sen. Patty Ritchie, R-Heuvelton; Sen. Jim Seward, R-Oneonta and Senator David Valesky, D-Oneida.

While the forums have ended and the report released, Senator Griffo intends to continue to tackle the problem of heroin and opioid abuse in his district with more outreach and education initiatives, which will be announced in the coming weeks.

The full report can be viewed [here](#).