



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senate Passes Senator Martins' Legislation Giving Parents More Options to Get Substance Abuse Treatment for Teens

Jack M. Martins

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Senator Jack M. Martins (R-7th Senate District) announced that the New York State Senate has passed legislation he sponsored to strengthen parents' ability to get their children substance abuse treatment. The legislation addresses a problem under current law in which parents are often forced to make the difficult choice to have their child arrested in order to keep them in treatment.

"No parent should have to make the agonizing choice between having their own child hauled away in handcuffs or not getting them the treatment they need. Giving parents another option to keep their child in treatment, without saddling them with a criminal record, will help save lives and prevent tragedies. At a time when every

Long Island community is battling the growing heroin epidemic, it's critically important that we provide parents with this new tool to protect their children," said Senator Martins, a member of the Senate's Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Abuse.

S3237 would allow parents to petition a Family Court to require their child to be placed into a substance abuse treatment services program for up to 60 days. The Court could require the child to stay in treatment for up to an additional 90 days if recommended by the treatment provider. This request would be filed similar to those for a Person In Need of Supervision (PINS) petition.

Parents do not have this ability under current law; children can check themselves out of a rehab program, unless they have been ordered to complete the program by the courts. As a result, parents often must resort to having their child arrested to get them into rehab and prevent them from checking out. This puts parents in the terrible position of having to saddle their child with a criminal record in order to get them the help they need.

Heroin and opioid abuse continues to be rampant on Long Island. A recent Newsday report noted that at least 341 people died of opioid overdoses in 2014. Hundreds more overdosed but were saved using Narcan, which reverses the effects of an opioid overdose. Total fatal and non-fatal opioid overdoses now exceed 1,000 a year on Long Island, an all time high.

The legislation was developed based on input from treatment providers, law enforcement, parents, and concerned residents at hearings held by the Senate's Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Abuse.

The legislation has been sent to the Assembly.