



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## Co-Chairs of Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Abuse Call for Enactment of Laree's Law

DELBEL (ORTT), MILLER (AMEDORE), & JEFFERSON February 11, 2016

| ISSUE: **HEROIN AND OPIOID ADDICTION**

In the wake of alarming news reports, where a deadly batch of heroin has led to 23 deaths in Erie County and numerous other overdoses in less than two weeks, Senators Rob Ortt, George Amedore, and Terrence Murphy are calling for the enactment of "Laree's Law." This legislation (S.4163) would allow law enforcement officials to charge a dealer with homicide if heroin or an opiate-controlled substance they sell causes an overdose death.

In the 11-day period beginning on January 29, 23 people aging in range from 20-61 in Erie County died as a result of overdose from heroin use. The majority of the overdoses are believed to be linked to an extremely deadly batch of heroin laced with fentanyl, a synthetic opiate that can be 50 times stronger than heroin.

"The heroin in our backyard is stronger and deadlier than anything out there. This must serve as a wake-up call to our community and to our state," **said Senator Rob Ortt**. "We lost at least 23 lives over the last two weeks as a result of this heroin. That's 23 of our sons and

daughters. And that should be 23 homicide charges against the dealers bringing these drugs onto our streets and into our schools. Enforcement alone will not cure the heroin epidemic, but it will provide a serious tool to law enforcement officials and a serious blow to the criminals killing our citizens.”

“The State of New York is facing a heroin crisis, and we need to do everything we can to stop the flow of these deadly drugs into our streets,” **said Senator George Amedore**. “Our efforts to increase prevention, treatment and recovery to help those suffering with addiction need to go hand-in-hand with stronger penalties for those who are bringing these drugs into our communities.”

“The face of heroin has changed. It is no longer solely associated with disreputable people in crumbling communities,” **said Senator Terrence Murphy**. “It has come to roost amongst the rich and the poor, in our schools and our homes. We need to protect our families through more stringent legislation that seeks to punish drug dealers peddling their poison. Of the seventeen pieces of legislation the senate passed last year, only one became a law. If we are serious about winning the war on drugs the Assembly needs to act.”

Laree’s Law is named after Laree Farrell Lincoln, a Colonie teenager who died of a heroin overdose three years ago. This bill would establish the crime of homicide for drug dealers who sell opiate-controlled substances that result in overdose, an A-1 felony punishable by 15-25 years in jail.

The legislation targets mid-to-high level drug dealers who profit from heroin sales, and includes a co-user carve out. In 2011, New York adopted a “Good Samaritan” law to protect individuals from charges related to an overdose if they attempt to help the individual and report the incident in a timely manner.

The Senate overwhelmingly passed Laree’s Law last year, with a vote of 53-9, but the Assembly failed to bring it to the floor for a vote.