



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

New York Senate Passes “Drug Take Back Act” To Prevent Unused Drugs From Feeding Addictions And Harming The Environment

[John J. Flanagan](#)

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ISSUE:

- [Heroin and Opioid Epidemic](#)
- [Addiction](#)
- [Drug Take Back Act](#)

SENATE PASSES **DRUG TAKE BACK ACT**



Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan (2nd Senate District) announced that the New York State Senate has passed legislation that would create the “Drug Take Back Act” which helps prevent opioids or other unused prescriptions from being abused and protects water supplies from improper disposal. The bill ([S7354](#)), which is sponsored by Senator Kemp Hannon (6th Senate District) and Senator Tom O’Mara (58th Senate District), would provide significantly more opportunities for New Yorkers to ensure the safe disposal of unused drugs by establishing a new statewide pharmaceutical drug take-back program.

The Drug Take Back Act holds pharmaceutical manufacturers responsible for all costs of the take-back program, ranging from public education and awareness to drug collection, transport, and destruction. The Act further requires chain pharmacies and mail-order pharmacies to provide consumers with collection options including drop boxes and prepaid mail-back envelopes.

“As our state continues to work to take positive steps to stem the tide of the opioid epidemic, it is crucial that we ensure that everyone who has a stake in this crisis is involved in the solution. Parents are working on the front lines to protect their children, teachers are working to educate our students, and police are working to stem the flow of drugs into our communities. We need

the pharmaceutical companies to join in the fight and to stand with all of us as we work to protect the young people of our region,” stated Senator Flanagan.

Senator Hannon, Chair of the Senate’s Health Committee, said, “New York has an opioid epidemic demanding attention now. Communities, law enforcement, elected officials and pharmacies holding special take-back days is just not enough. More aggressive efforts to curb the tide of opioid addiction are essential. Providing New Yorkers with safe and accessible disposal methods will help prevent addiction, which often starts with misuse of unused medications. This legislation not only helps address the opioid epidemic, it makes sure all medications are properly disposed of and do not contaminate our water supplies.”

Senator O’Mara, Chair of the Senate’s Environmental Conservation Committee, said, “It’s incredibly important to do anything and everything we can to complement and support the efforts of local law enforcement and other community leaders to combat prescription drug abuse. These efforts include [National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day coming up on April 28](#) and initiatives like this one to facilitate the collection, and safe and responsible disposal of unused medications. This proposal to greatly expand the number of permanent, locally based drop-off locations would be a very positive, cost-effective addition to the state's ongoing, overall strategy to protect our communities and local environments.”

Last year, Governor Cuomo vetoed a bill ([S6750](#)) that would have helped expand existing drug take-back efforts, stop more opioids from getting into the hands of abusers, and prevent the contamination of the environment. Senators Hannon and O’Mara then introduced this new bill to create a unified, statewide drug take-back program that saves taxpayer money spent on programs currently operated by law enforcement agencies and public officials and helps reduce medication misuse and improper disposal.

Opioid addictions are known to start when individuals access leftover prescriptions found at home in medicine cabinets. By giving New Yorkers more opportunities to find ways to properly dispose of unused drugs, the potential for abuse and addiction is decreased. In addition, proper disposal helps protect the state’s water supplies because fewer people would improperly dispose of drugs by flushing them down a toilet or using other means that result in water contamination and negative impacts to aquatic life.

Last year, New York made a historic \$2.5 billion investment in improving and protecting water resources, and keeping drugs out of water supplies is another important and necessary step. This measure was also included in the Senate's one-house budget proposal passed earlier this year.

The Senate also passed another bill ([S6673](#)) sponsored by Senator Hannon that requires the state Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation to create, maintain, and regularly update a statewide web-based listing of prescription drug disposal sites, events, and other disposal options for consumers. The site would be searchable by zip code so New Yorkers can find a site closest to them when they need to get rid of prescriptions or other drugs in their homes.

The bills were sent to the Assembly.

related legislation

[2017-S7354](#)

-
- Introduced
 - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
 - - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
 - - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
 - Delivered to Governor
 - Signed By Governor
 -

[Enacts the drug take back act](#)

January 09, 2018

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by [Kemp Hannon](#)

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Aye

Nay

2017-S6673

-
- Introduced
 - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
 - - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
 - - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
 - Delivered to Governor
 - Signed By Governor
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[Directs the departments of health and environmental conservation to establish a statewide web listing of drug disposal sites, events and other disposal options in the state](#)

June 12, 2017

In Assembly Committee

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Aye

Nay