



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Peter Oberacker

Dedicate Opioid Settlement Funds for Treatment and Recovery Services

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ALBANY – 04/26/21 – Senator Peter Oberacker (R/C-Schenevus) along with members of the Senate Republican Conference today echoed the calls of advocates throughout the state to ensure that any future opioid settlement funds be put into a “lockbox” dedicated to improve and expand treatment and recovery services for New Yorkers struggling with addiction.

The call follows passage of a state budget, negotiated between Governor Cuomo and legislative Democrats, that funneled opioid settlement funds into the general fund instead of creating a dedicated “lockbox” that could be used to enhance and increase investment in much needed prevention, treatment, and recovery services for New Yorkers who are struggling with addiction.

“The opioid epidemic has devastated individual, families, and entire communities,” said Senator Peter Oberacker. **“The isolation many have been dealing with over the past year has further compounded the issue and left even more individuals in need. It is unconscionable that funds meant for opioid prevention, education, and treatment could be siphoned away to pay for unrelated pet projects. New York State must ensure that opioid settlement funds are restricted and used for their intended purpose – saving lives.”**

Earlier this year, New York State Attorney General Letitia James, along with a coalition of AGs from 47 states, announced a \$573 million settlement agreement with McKinsey & Company for their role in the ongoing opioid epidemic. New York State will receive more than \$32 million from the agreement.

Upon the announcement of the award, advocates and lawmakers urged the money – and all future opioid settlement funds – be put in a “lockbox” for the sole purpose of expanding and improving prevention, treatment, recovery and support services for those struggling with addiction or in recovery. Senate Democrats hailed a proposal they included in their one-house proposal to do so – but instead, voted in favor of the enacted budget that failed to create a dedicated “lockbox” for the settlement funds.

In a letter to Governor Cuomo, Senator Oberacker and other members of the Republican conference expressed opposition to the final budget language that gives the governor broad authority on how to disperse the funds, and called on him to ensure that the entire amount

is used toward enhancing treatment and recovery services throughout the state.

“I am calling on the governor to promise transparency, do what is right, and ensure that every last dollar received through opioid settlements is used to help those in need of addiction services,”

concluded Senator Oberacker.