



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

Harckham Calls for State of Emergency in US, NY to Fight the Overdose Epidemic

PETE HARCKHAM July 15, 2021

| ISSUE: **OVERDOSES, ADDICTION AND OVERDOSE PREVENTION, STATE OF EMERGENCY, BATTLING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC**



Peekskill, NY – New York State Senator Pete Harckham, chair of the Senate Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, called on President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. and Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to declare a state of emergency in the United States and New York, respectively, to fight the overdose epidemic.

“Over four times the number of people died last year from drug overdoses than from gun violence in the United States, which is why I am calling on President Biden and Governor Cuomo to each declare a state of emergency to address this public health crisis,” said Harckham.

“We need to marshal every public health resource possible to stop the frightening increase in overdose deaths occurring every day in our cities and villages,” Harckham added. “Federal and state officials have to act with utmost urgency and work together to save the lives of our friends and neighbors here in New York and around the country.”

Harckham’s request follows the release yesterday of a report from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that over 93,000 people in the U.S.—an average of about 250 people a day—died of a drug overdose in 2020. In comparison, 19,380 lives were lost last year to gun violence, according to *The Washington Post*.

Last week, Cuomo declared a state of emergency regarding gun violence and committed over \$135 million to counter the alarming rise of shootings around the state. Also, President Biden recently convened a meeting of top law enforcement officials and others to discuss a plan to reduce gun violence.

“Where is our moral outrage regarding the latest overdose statistics and the lack of insistence that the overdose crisis be met with a massive response?” asked Harckham.

“It is as if these lost lives simply do not matter, and the specter of future lives lost matters even less,” he said. “When it comes to the overdose crisis, we are truly in a state of emergency. It’s now time to officially declare it so and begin to provide all the resources possible to save lives.”