

NEW YORK  
STATE  
SENATE  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247



July 21, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President of the United States of America  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of the State of New York  
Executive Chamber  
New York State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear President Biden and Governor Cuomo:

Re: Declaring States of Emergency to Address the Opioid Overdose Crisis

As members of the New York State Senate, we are calling on you both to declare a state of emergency in the United States and New York, respectively, to fight the overdose epidemic that last year took more American lives than the combined fatalities in the Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

The report released last week by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes 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, this is four times the number lost last year to gun violence.

It is clear that the federal Government and the State of New York need to marshal every public health resource possible to stop the frightening increase in overdose deaths that are occurring every day in our cities and villages. 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.

We appreciate that a state of emergency was declared in New York on July 6, 2021, regarding gun violence and over \$135 million committed to counter the alarming rise of shootings around the state. Also noteworthy is the recent convening in our nation's capital of top law enforcement officials and others to discuss a plan to reduce gun violence.

But we ask: where is our collective moral outrage regarding the latest overdose statistics and the lack of insistence that the overdose crisis be met with a massive response? Sadly, it is as if these lost lives simply do not matter, and the specter of future lives lost matters even less.

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.

This all-out effort to turn back the overdose crisis will require expanding access to evidence-based prevention, harm-reduction, treatment and recovery services, including supportive housing. There will need to be medication treatment upon demand, with new emergency rooms, correctional settings and crisis intervention centers, all fully staffed.

Moreover, it is time to fully integrate evidence-based treatment of co-occurring disorders. Education and prevention efforts need to be ramped up, year after year. We also need to carefully monitor how opioid settlement funds are spent, act transparently and position these funds accordingly.

Most importantly, we need to end barriers to treatment that disproportionately impact low income, minority and rural residents. There is no time to lose—we simply cannot let this immense tragedy and human-made disaster persist. Please declare a state of emergency and do everything possible to stop this overdose epidemic.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Senator Pete Harckham  
40<sup>th</sup> Senate District




Senator Gustavo Rivera  
33<sup>rd</sup> Senate District



Senator Samra Brouk  
55<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Senator Rachel May  
53<sup>rd</sup> Senate District



Senator Jamaal Bailey  
36<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Senator Roxanne Persaud  
19<sup>th</sup> Senate District

NEW YORK  
STATE  
SENATE

ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anna M. Kaplan".

Senator Anna M. Kaplan  
7<sup>th</sup> Senate District

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michelle Hinchey".

Senator Michelle Hinchey  
46<sup>th</sup> Senate District

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James F. Gaughran".

Senator James Gaughran  
5<sup>th</sup> Senate District

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Thomas".

Senator Kevin Thomas  
6<sup>th</sup> Senate District

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Sanders Jr.".

Senator James Sanders Jr.  
10<sup>th</sup> Senate District

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John C. Liu".

Senator John C. Liu  
11<sup>th</sup> Senate District

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Ramos".

Senator Jessica Ramos  
13<sup>th</sup> Senate District

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leroy Comrie".

Senator Leroy Comrie  
14<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Senator Toby Ann Stavisky  
16<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Senator Julia Salazar  
18<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Senator Andrew Gounardes  
22<sup>nd</sup> Senate District



Senator Jabari Brisport  
25<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Senator Liz Krueger  
28<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Senator José M. Serrano  
29<sup>th</sup> Senate District



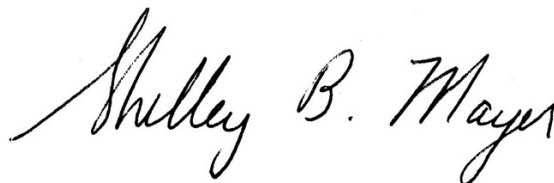
Senator Robert Jackson  
31<sup>st</sup> Senate District



Senator Luis R. Sepúlveda  
32<sup>nd</sup> Senate District



Senator Alessandra Biaggi  
34<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Senator Shelley B. Mayer  
37<sup>th</sup> Senate District

NEW YORK  
STATE  
SENATE

ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Skoufis".

Senator James Skoufis  
39<sup>th</sup> Senate District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John W. Mannion".

Senator John W. Mannion  
50<sup>th</sup> Senate District

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeremy A. Cooney".

Senator Jeremy A. Cooney  
56<sup>th</sup> Senate District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy M. Kennedy".

Senator Timothy M. Kennedy  
63<sup>rd</sup> Senate District

Senator John E. Brooks  
8<sup>th</sup> Senate District