

Martins' anti-heroin bills pass state Senate

BY BILL SAN ANTONIO

Two pieces of legislation proposed by Sen. Jack Martins (R-Mineola) to curtail heroin and opiate-related deaths have passed in the state Senate, according to Martins' office.

The first gives parents the authority to place their children into substance-abuse treatment facilities for up to 60 days and grants the courts the ability to determine whether a child would require an additional 90 days if recommended by a treatment center, while the second regulates heroin and opiate education as part of a school drug prevention curriculum.

"Every community in the state is being affected by the growing heroin epidemic, and children are the No. 1 target. Heroin is so dangerous and deadly that children become addicts after using it just once," Martins said in a statement issued Tuesday. "Giving parents new tools to get their children into treatment, before it's too late, and increasing education about the dangers of this drug will help save lives and prevent tragedies in our communities."

There have been 240 heroin-related deaths on Long Island in the last two years, Martins said.

According to the substance-abuse cen-

ter Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency, the number of families in treatment has increased from 100 a month in 2009 to more than 850 a month in 2014. The center estimates that 80 percent of that increase is due to heroin and opiate addiction.

Martins said at a press briefing on Friday that there are as many as 25 bills targeting heroin and opiate use reform - ranging from overdose treatment and law enforcement practices to insurance coverage and community awareness - pending in the state Legislature.

But Martins said that heroin reform begins with giving people the proper education on heroin and opiate addiction and promoting drug prevention before problems arise.

"If we are going to get a handle on this, we need to reach students," Martins said, citing the state's past success in instituting anti-smoking, anti-drinking and healthy lifestyle education initiatives into school curriculums.

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Blank Slate's Epstein wins two press awards

BY BILL SAN ANTONIO

Blank Slate Media columnist Judy Epstein won two prizes on Thursday at the Press Club of Long Island's annual media awards dinner at the Woodbury Country Club.

Epstein took second place in the contest's humor category for her Oct. 25, 2013 column "A Look on the Lighter Side: That'll Be One Personal Crisis, to Go," and third

place for her Sept. 6, 2013 installment, "A Look on the Lighter Side: Don't Tell Anyone, But It's Not Easy Being Green."

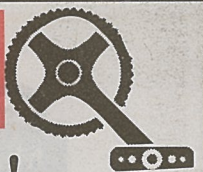
"It's a real honor. These are from colleagues all over the Island and it's a real honor to be recognized by them and a real pleasure to win for work in the Blank Slate papers," she said Tuesday.

Epstein said she "couldn't do it without my family, who constantly provides me with material."



Judy Epstein's columns for News Times Newspapers take both 2nd and 3rd place in Press Club of Long Island's Media Awards, June 5

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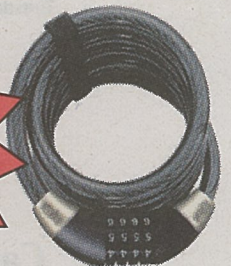
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