

Singas presents legislation to address county heroin epidemic

BY JOE NIKIC

Acting Nassau County District Attorney Madeline Singas sent a letter on Friday to state legislators calling on them to hold a special session this fall to consider her fully written legislation designed to combat the nationwide heroin epidemic's effects in New York.

"An epidemic of heroin abuse is exploding across the country and here in New York," Singas said in the letter. "This year alone, heroin deaths are up 100 percent from the same time last year. This is a crisis that requires immediate legislative action."

Michael Scotto, a former Manhattan prosecutor is challenging Singas in a Democratic primary for DA on Thursday, has claimed that Singas has not been aggressive enough in combatting heroin use in Nassau County.

In the letter to the Legislature, Singas summarizes a five-bill package written by her staff that she said will give law enforcement the tools needed to legally take down drug dealers.

"Current law too often lets dealers off too easily, and to stop the pipeline, it's critical that the Legislature take immediate action help us take dealers off the street and end this scourge," Singas said.



Acting Nassau County District Attorney Madeline Singas

The first proposed bill in the package will create a "death by dealer" statute that allows felony homicide charges against dealers whose customers die from overdoses.

The second proposed bill will prevent dealers from qualifying for non-jail "diversion" dispositions intended for addicts.

The third proposed bill increases penalties for dealers who sell heroin to children.

The fourth proposed bill increases the penalties for drug trade paraphernalia.

The final proposed bill increases penalties and revokes licensing from doctors and

pharmacists who illegally sell prescriptions and prescription drugs, which are considered to be a gateway to heroin abuse.

"These legislative changes will give prosecutors better tools to take on street-level dealers, to identify their suppliers, and to collaborate with our law enforcement partners to cut the pipeline of heroin into our state and our neighborhoods," Singas said.

The DA's office has been engaged in the fight against the heroin epidemic with a three-pronged approach that embraces early prevention, effective treatment for addicts, and aggressive prosecution against dealers.

"As a prosecutor, I have spoken to too many heartbroken parents who have lost their children to overdoses, and seen too many promising lives cut short by this epidemic," Singas said. "By putting dealers on notice that a sale that leads to death means a long prison sentence; that selling heroin to a child means a long time upstate; that they won't be able to game their way into diversion when they should be in jail; and that dirty doctors and pharmacists who sell prescriptions and drugs for profit will be punished like the drug dealers they are, we can make headway in this difficult fight."

Dem DA primary on Thursday

BY BILL SAN ANTONIO

Voters were to decide the winner of a Democratic primary for Nassau County district attorney Thursday between acting DA Madeline Singas and Port Washington resident Michael A. Scotto.

Blank Slate Media's coverage of the primary may be found Friday on TheIslandNow.com and in the Sept. 18 edition of its newspapers.

The winner of the primary will face Republican Kate Murray, the Town of Hempstead supervisor, in November's general election.

Singas, of Manhasset, assumed the DA position in January, and in May received the county Democratic Committee's endorsement.

Scotto, a former chief assistant DA in Manhattan, has alleged Singas and predecessor Kathleen Rice's offices have been ineffective and reactive in their practices.

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