



## **SB 1701 (Silverstein/Cassidy, passed Senate 57-0): Support Emergency Medical Services Access Act to Save Lives**

**“Last September 20<sup>th</sup>, I lost my 19 year-old son Billy to a heroin overdose. I would give anything to have just one more day with my son—one more chance to help him. As a police officer who fought the war on drugs for more than 30 years, my purpose was always to save people from losing their life to drugs. The intent of the Emergency Medical Services Access Act is just that—to save lives.”**

**-- Captain John Roberts (Ret.), Chicago Police Department**

### **Fatal drug overdoses are a deadly problem in Illinois.**

Illinois is one of 16 states where more people die of drug overdoses than car accidents. Will and McHenry Counties experienced more than 100% increase in heroin related deaths from 2006-2008.

### **Friends and family fear arrest and don't call 911 or get medical help, causing unnecessary deaths.**

Instead, they flee the scene of the overdose resulting in a fatal overdose or leave the body at an emergency room door. Fast, emergency medical treatment can save lives.

### **SB 1701 will save lives by encouraging friends and family to call 911 or get medical help.**

SB 1701 will protect friends and family who seek medical help or call 911 and individuals who need emergency medical attention from arrest and prosecution for drug possession. They will be protected only if small amounts of drugs are found, such as less than 3 grams of heroin or cocaine (less than 20% of the amount that qualifies for Class 4 possession for controlled substances or Class 3 possession for methamphetamines). Law enforcement could prosecute for drug sales or if large amounts of drugs are found.

### **New Mexico, Washington, and 100 colleges and universities have similar laws or policies in place to save lives. A 2009 law was the first step. This bill will save more lives.**

In 2009, Illinois enacted the Overdose Prevention Law, PL 096-0361, (Trotter/Miller), which allows trained individuals to administer life-saving overdose reversal medication in an emergency. The EMS Access Act will further save lives by protecting these individuals and others from prosecution for trying to save the life of someone who overdosed.

## ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORTERS

ACLU of Illinois

AIDS Foundation of Chicago

Cabrini Green Legal Aid

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers

Chicago Legal Clinic

Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association

Illinois Association for Medically Assisted Addiction Treatment

Illinois Nurses Association

Illinois Public Health Association

Illinois Society of Addiction Medicine

Illinois State Bar Association

John Howard Association

Latino Cultural Exchange Coalition

Law Enforcement against Prohibition

Midwest Harm Reduction Institute

Protestants for the Common Good

Roosevelt University's Illinois Consortium on Drug Policy

Safer Foundation

Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law

Treatment Alternatives for Safer Communities