



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

"Last September 20th, 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 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.

Connecticut, Maryland, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Washington, Utah, 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