

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



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Media Release

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COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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Suffolk County Bans State Funding to Two Sober Home Operators

Unsafe, Unregulated Homes Proof State Oversight is Needed



Pictured: (Legislator Kate Browning with Legislator Rob Calarco, Legislator Bill Lindsay and recovery advocates announcing legislation to eliminate State funding to slumlord homes in front of a Solutions House Inc. home in Blue Point on June 28, 2017)

Hauppauge, NY – Suffolk County continued its strong crack down on unregulated sober homes this week by unanimously passing IR 1577-17, sponsored by Legislator Kate Browning (WF-Shirley) and co-sponsored by Legislator Bill Lindsay (D-Holbrook), at the Suffolk County Legislature’s July 25 general meeting. The legislation prohibits payments to Cion Solutions Inc. and Solutions House Inc., which are two housing providers that operate homes that have been riddled with safety and sobriety issues. These homes are a detriment to residents seeking safe housing while in recovery and the quality of life for surrounding neighborhoods

For decades local governments have been lobbying New York State to regulate homes that are advertised as a safe, sober living environment, when in fact drugs, intimidation and unsafe conditions are the norm. In light of an ongoing drug epidemic, the need for recovery housing has never been greater. Due to a lack of regulation, no standards exist and no agency is responsible to hold landlords or operators accountable. The results are extremely negative impacts to surrounding communities, frequent overdoses, a larger burden on emergency services and high rates of relapse or death for tenants living in these homes.

“Far too many lives have been lost and communities negatively impacted without any action from New York State to get control over these homes,” stated Legislator Browning. “Our tax dollars are lining the pockets of slumlords while contributing to drug addiction and even death. With the passage of IR 1577-17 we have sent a

strong message that our taxpayer dollars will not be wasted on slumlords who are preying on vulnerable residents. I thank my colleagues for their support.”

Legislator Browning created the Suffolk County Sober Home Oversight Board in 2011, which was charged with addressing the lack of standards for sober homes. Today, Suffolk County is the only municipality in New York State that has regulated homes, but it’s a voluntary pilot program and State legislation regulation is needed to enforce standards on all recovery homes. The lack of State action has allowed corporations such as Cion Solutions Inc. and Solutions House Inc. to collect taxpayer funds while providing substandard living conditions and no services for those in recovery.

“For far too long, our most vulnerable citizens have been underserved at a critical time in their treatment by these so-called ‘sober homes’,” said Deputy Presiding Officer Rob Calarco. “Unscrupulous landlords are blighting our community with these unsafe and substandard homes that are taking advantage of people and our County. It is time we do something about it, and we are calling upon New York State to be a partner in this process.”

“Collaboration from all levels and forms of government along with the rehabilitation community is necessary to give those suffering from addiction their deserved chance at recovery,” said Legislator Lindsay. “Unscrupulous landlords who think they are above the law and subject addicts to unsavory and unsafe living conditions just increase the likelihood of relapse. I look forward to working with our County and State reps to improve the standards of rehabilitation, prevention, and intervention for those on the road to recovery and address the rampant addiction problem within our communities.”

“LIRA is dedicated to addressing the needs of our recovery community and we are honored to stand alongside committed legislators to help highlight the vital need for safe, supportive, recovery housing,” stated Nora Milligan, spokesperson for Long Island Recovery Association. “Our organization will continue to advocate for sorely needed regulation of recovery homes on Long Island.”

I.R. 1577-17 is awaiting the signature of County Executive Steve Bellone, and will also require support from New York State officials to withhold payments since Social Services Law is regulated by the State.

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