

# NEWS...



*From The Office of State Representative Kelly Cassidy*

**For Immediate Release:  
August 28, 2018**

## **Representative Cassidy's Senate Bill 336 to Curb Opioid Epidemic Signed into Law**

Senate Bill 336, introduced in the House by Representative Cassidy was signed by the Governor today, transforming the way our health care professionals can treat pain for patients and, in turn can prevent the spread of further opioid addictions. Senate Bill 336 passed with bipartisan support in both chambers and creates the Opioid Alternative Pilot Program. Patients will have greater access to medical cannabis as this bill permits doctors and patients to choose temporary access to the Medical Cannabis Program in instances where they might otherwise be prescribed an opiate. The bill further reforms the Medical Cannabis Pilot Program application process by allowing patients to purchase medical cannabis while their application is being processed while also removing provisions requiring applicants to undergo fingerprints and background checks which were previously part of the bureaucratic process limiting access to its use.

“Recent national news has all of us reflecting on what can be done here in Illinois to avert and stop the opioid crisis, prevention, and treatment are key to ending any type of addiction. Senate Bill 336 is a step in the right direction to reforming the way we treat pain and will give more options to individuals who would otherwise be faced with being prescribed highly addictive opioids” Cassidy said. “This bill also does a fantastic job of ending the limited access people had to medical cannabis and addresses the prolonged wait times, by allowing individuals access to the program while their application is pending.”

SB 336 is great example of the ways Illinois can lead by working together to solve problems and seeking creative solutions together. Sen. Don Harmon brought the issue forth in the Senate and began the process by bringing together members from both sides of the aisle to develop this approach. That collaboration and innovation continued in the House as the details were worked out requiring significant cooperation between legislators, advocates and the departments. Both chambers passed the bill with overwhelming bipartisan super majorities. Other states have already followed Illinois' lead and are now pursuing this approach, with New York State having done so even before the bill was signed into law.

Representative Cassidy has worked for years to keep Illinois on the forefront of these issues. While employed at the Cook County State's Attorney's office in the 1990s till 2011, she assisted in passing legislation decriminalizing the possession of clean syringes. She also helped work to build a diverse coalition of law enforcement and harm reduction advocates. After being sworn into office, one of