

Supporting the Good Samaritan Emergency Response Act (S851/A578)

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE GOOD SAMARITAN EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACT (S851/A578) AND REQUESTING THE NEW JERSEY SENATE AND ASSEMBLY TO OVERRIDE THE GOVERNOR'S VETO

WHEREAS, Overdose is a major public health problem and the leading cause of accidental death in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, More than 6,000 New Jersey residents have died from a drug overdose since 2004, with more than 700 New Jersey residents having died in 2009 alone; and

WHEREAS, The majority of overdose victims do not actually die until several hours after they have taken a drug and most of these deaths occur in the presence of others, meaning that there is both time and opportunity to summon medical assistance; and

WHEREAS, fear of arrest and prosecution often prevents people who are in a position to help from calling emergency services; and

WHEREAS, many of these deaths are entirely preventable; and

WHEREAS, saving lives should always take priority over punishing behavior; and

WHEREAS, a "Good Samaritan" law will encourage people to act by removing the fear of arrest and prosecution and get help during life threatening situations; and

WHEREAS, ten states, Connecticut, New Mexico, New York, Washington State, Illinois, Colorado, California, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Florida, have already enacted Good Samaritan laws for drug overdoses and similar measures are currently pending in several other states; and

WHEREAS, the Good Samaritan Emergency Response Act (S851/A578) is supported by a long list of public health organizations, treatment providers and advocacy groups, including Hunterdon Prevention Resources and Safe Communities Coalition, BACCHUS of Raritan Valley Community College, Drug Policy Alliance, National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence—NJ, the New Jersey State Nurses Association, the National Association of Social Workers, the New Jersey Hospital Association, Integrity House, the Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry, Hyacinth AIDS Foundation, Well of Hope Drop-in Center, New Horizon Treatment Service, the Atlantic City Syringe Access Program, the South Jersey AIDS Alliance, Camden Area Health Education Center, the North Jersey Community Research Initiative, the New Jersey Women and AIDS Network, the New Jersey Deputy Fire Chiefs Association, Paterson Counseling Center, the ACLU of New Jersey, COPE Center, Buddies of New Jersey, Inc., the Hepatitis C Association, Parent to Parent, and the Center for Family Services.

WHEREAS, the Good Samaritan Emergency Response Act (S851/A578), will provide limited legal protection for those who witness a drug overdose and summon medical assistance; and

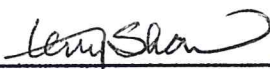
WHEREAS, early attention and positive reinforcement given to anyone acting as a Good Samaritan may be one more chance to prevent a death due to drug overdose;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the COUNCIL calls upon the New Jersey State Senate and Assembly to override the Governor's veto and pass the Good Samaritan Emergency Response Act (S851/A578), with bipartisan support, in a manner that encourages our residents to call for emergency medical assistance on behalf of the afflicted individual, their family members, friends and communities and to enforce the priority of saving life over punishing behavior.

BOROUGH OF BARRINGTON

NOVEMBER 12, 2012

BY: 
Robert Klaus, Mayor

ATTEST: 
Terry Shannon, Borough Clerk