



**In re: Creation of an Infant Recovery Centers Pilot Program
(S.266-Rivera)**

Memorandum of Support

In New York and across the United States, opioid addiction has become a crisis. According to the Centers for Disease Control, drug overdoses accounted for 70,237 deaths in the U.S. in 2017. Two-thirds of those deaths were opioid-related. Opioids do not just take a toll on adults; they also take a toll on babies who are born with opioid withdrawal symptoms. As the number of opioid-addicted adults has increased, so has the number of infants suffering from opioid withdrawal (also known as neonatal abstinence syndrome). Those infants need specialized medical care.

Bill S.266-Rivera would respond to the needs of infants suffering from opioid withdrawal by creating an infant recovery centers pilot program. Under this legislation, the New York State Department of Health would open at least four recovery centers across the state for infants suffering withdrawal symptoms. The bill would also require the Department to report to the Legislature on the effectiveness of the program.

New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms supports Bill S.266-Rivera. This important legislation passed the Senate in 2019, 2020, and 2021 and passed the Assembly in 2022. It is hoped that this bill will become law in 2023, providing vulnerable infants whose young lives have been damaged by maternal opioid use with the care that they need to survive and thrive.