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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Statewide Opioid Task Force Bill Passes First Committee Stop

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today thanked Chair Gayle Harrell and each member of the Senate Health Policy Committee for passing legislation to create a Statewide Task Force on Opioid Drug Abuse. Senator Wilton Simpson is sponsoring SB 1658 that would create the statewide task force. The bill passed the committee without a single no vote.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “I want to thank Chair Harrell, Senator Simpson, Senate leadership and each member of the Senate Health Policy Committee for passing this important public-safety legislation. Florida needs a Statewide Opioid Task Force to help combat the opioid crisis claiming 17 lives a day in our state. Combating this crisis is a top priority of our office, and this legislation is extremely vital to our mission to stop opioid abuse and save lives.”

Senator Gayle Harrell said, “I am pleased the Senate Health Policy Committee was the first committee to hear and pass this life-saving legislation. We must take bold steps to combat this crisis killing Floridians and I want to thank Attorney General Moody for making this issue a top priority of her administration.”

Senator Wilton Simpson said, “Deaths from opioid abuse are preventable, yet the number of Floridians dying from opioid abuse continues to grow. I want to thank Attorney General Moody for her efforts to combat this crisis and the members of the Health Policy Committee for voting to provide the state with the tools it needs to fight drug abuse and save lives. I believe the creation of this task force is a huge step in the right direction.”

Florida’s Statewide Task Force on Opioid Drug Abuse would:

· Study the cost of the crisis on state and local governments;
· Identify available programs that have been successful in combating opioid abuse;
· Work to better understand the sources of addiction;
· Explore whether there is need for additional regulatory activity; and, among other things,
· Evaluate and identify ways to reduce the demand for opioids and decrease the supply.

The task force will also examine if law enforcement would benefit from new training or resources to help equip them to handle opioid users. The task force would be staffed by members of the Attorney General’s Office.

The house companion bill, HB 875, will be in the House Criminal Justice Subcommittee Tuesday.