

STATE SENATOR • JOHN J. GLEASON • 27TH DISTRICT

Gleason Press Release

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Gleason Moves to Discharge Drug Immunity Legislation, Calls on Senate Republicans to Act on Conscience & Common Sense

Senate Republicans Vote Against Giving Victims Harmed or Killed by Drug Companies Right to Recourse

LANSING-Senator John J. Gleason (D-Flushing) today continued to fight for Michigan victims of harmful prescription drugs as he moved to discharge Senate Bill 43, his legislation to end drug immunity for companies whose products kill or injure patients. Sen. Gleason's aggressive attempt to gain traction on this issue and force the full body of the Senate to vote on his bill was met with the same Republican opposition that has continued to stonewall this reform and disregard the rights of Michigan citizens. Today's vote on drug immunity failed on a party-line vote.

"I'm tired of being told this pursuit is 'frivolous' and 'not a priority' by my colleagues across the aisle," Sen. Gleason said. "How they can continue to sweep the rights of Michigan citizens under the rug in favor of big drug manufacturers and their special interest money is beyond me. It's continually disheartening for the victims and survivors of faulty prescription drugs to look on as their rights for recourse disintegrate in the Senate."

Michigan is the only state in the nation that shields big drug companies that make and sell harmful products from giving legal recourse to victims and their families. While Vioxx is dominating the headlines right now, Michigan's drug immunity law affects victims of *all* defective and dangerous prescription drugs, including Celebrex, Rezulin and Fen Phen as well as the potential risks of new drugs not even on the market yet. And though spotlighted by their plight, this legislation to end drug industry immunity is not just for those who have already been harmed or lost a loved one, but for the thousands of residents who stand to do so in the future if this law does not change.

"On behalf of DIIME members, victims, and their families in Michigan, we are calling on Senators Bishop and Kuipers to put the people of Michigan ahead of the powerful drug companies," said Leslie Richter, a member of Drug Industry Immunity Must End (DIIME) who lost her husband to complications from Vioxx. "And I encourage all citizens of Michigan to visit DIIME's web site and sign our petition to Senator Mike Bishop at www.michcitizenaction.org."

Sen. Gleason's legislation was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee on January

24th and has yet to receive a hearing. Its companion bill, House Bill 4044, passed the House on February 27th by a 70-39 vote, and is also languishing in the Senate Judiciary Committee. Senator Gleason's efforts to force a vote on the drug immunity legislation currently before the Senate is the latest move to force Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop and Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Wayne Kuipers to take action and protect Michigan citizens. Senator Gleason has also sent a letter to Senators Tom George and Roger Kahn, both physicians, appealing to their sensibilities of preserving the health and well-being of the people of Michigan to do their part to move this legislation forward.

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