



TOM CILMI
Suffolk County Legislator
10th District

For Immediate Release

Date: April 19, 2016

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Cilmi, leaders call on SNL for apology, funding for treatment

Legislator Tom Cilmi (East Islip, NY) is calling on NBC, the producers of SNL (Saturday Night Live) and Julia Louis Dreyfus to issue an apology for a skit that aired Saturday, April 16, featuring the actress which satirized heroin.

The skit depicted Dreyfus and cast members as happy go-lucky parents who use a fictitious product called “Heroin AM” so they could ostensibly enjoy the effects of heroin while carrying on with their normal lives. The skit ends with a scene depicting the former Seinfeld actress as a bus driver taking a group of happy children off to school.

Cilmi said the skit was in poor taste and called on the show’s Producer, Lorne Michaels, to issue an apology, produce a public service announcement, and donate all advertising revenue from the show’s next episode to help addicts get into treatment.

“Long Island is home to hundreds of parents who have lost their children to heroin overdoses,” said Cilmi. “To satirize heroin as if it was some sort of energy drink was a slap in the face to everyone who has suffered and everyone who has worked so hard to combat this epidemic.”

Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds, Executive Director of Family and Childrens’ Association and a recognized professional voice in substance abuse said, “That thousands of families across our nation are grieving the loss of loved ones and countless others spend their Saturday nights praying that their kids will make it home alive is no laughing matter. By the time Sunday morning rolled around, another 130 Americans had succumbed to fatal overdoses, many related to heroin, and it’s sad that both SNL and Julia Louis Dreyfus used those struggles as fodder for a joke. It’s hard to imagine that this would be ok with any other disease and it’s not ok with addiction.”

Linda Ventura, a mom who lost her twenty one year old son Thomas to a heroin overdose called the skit “breathtakingly ignorant.” She said, “During a drug pandemic, not to have the common sense and decency to be sensitive to the incomprehensible grief families and love ones are experiencing is unforgivable. We, the families, will be boycotting SNL and all their sponsors products.”

Legislator Cilmi criticized SNL and Louis Dreyfus. He said, “SNL has seen its share of cast members succumb to addictive behavior. They should know better. The show and, quite frankly, others in the entertainment industry are very quick to criticize government for a variety of social conditions. It’s time the industry looks within and accepts some accountability. Rather than an unfunny skit, an apology, a public service announcement, and a generous donation would be a much more fitting tribute to the memory of Belushi, Farley and the many others in the business who lost their lives to substance abuse, not to mention the thousands who have died in relative obscurity without fanfare.”

Cilmi says he hopes to hear from the show, but if he doesn’t, he’s prepared to reach out to them. He said, “We have dozens if not hundreds of moms and dads who would be willing to pay the show a visit should we need to.”

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