



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

## Senate Passes Valesky Legislation to Fight Embalming Fluid Abuse

DAVID J. VALESKY June 22, 2010

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SYRACUSE, N.Y.— Legislation aimed at curbing the dangerous abuse of embalming fluid as a drug, sponsored by State Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida), passed the New York State Senate.

“The increased use of embalming fluid with other drugs has become a public safety issue in Central New York and across the nation,” said Senator Valesky. “This legislation will provide law enforcement with a vehicle to get this dangerous substance off the streets, and to hopefully deter anyone from taking a chance with it in the first place.”

In the past two years, CNY hospitals have reported a sharp increase in numbers of patients admitted resulting from ingesting cigarettes or marijuana dipped in embalming fluid and often laced with other drugs such as PCP, commonly called “water.” When inhaled or ingested embalming fluid can cause brain or heart damage, and, when combined with other drugs, can cause severely violent behavior, delusions and paranoia.

Currently, embalming fluid can be bought online and by manufacturers legally. The new legislation (S7542b) will make it a class A misdemeanor to possess embalming fluid with the intent to use it for ingestion or inhalation, or to sell it to another person for that purpose.

“This will be a great tool for law enforcement,” Cit of Syracuse Police Chief Frank Fowler said. “We are seeing a spike in violence in our community due to embalming fluid. By making it illegal, we are empowering law enforcement to take a proactive approach to getting the drug off our streets and making Syracuse a safer place to live.”

Currently available on the street for about \$20 per dipped cigarette or marijuana joint, “water” is permeating both cities and the suburbs, and many youth and young adults are ingesting it without full knowledge of the risks.

Several recent incidents in Syracuse and Central New York prompted Senator Valesky to introduce the legislation.

For example, last year, a man in Syracuse who admitted to smoking a cigarette dipped in embalming fluid drove his car into two pedestrians, causing serious injury to both. One had to have his leg amputated and lost the use of one arm.

“I would like to applaud Senator Valesky on this important first step on addressing this issue of embalming fluid being used as a drug,” said Helen Hudson of Mothers Against Gun Violence. “This will open doors to instituting legislation on a bigger level targeting the sale over the internet.”

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