



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Sen. Griffo Pushes for Measure to Fight Over-the-counter Sales of Meth-like Substances

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO March 15, 2011

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Senator Griffo Introduces Bill to Ban Hallucinogenic "Bath Salts"

Dangerous meth-like drugs marketed as "bath salts" a growing problem

Senator Joseph A. Griffo (R-C-IP, Rome) today announced new legislation (Senate bill 3322) to ban the sale, manufacturing possession and distribution of deceptively-labeled, hallucinogenic "bath salts" in New York State. These "bath salts" are a dangerous series of

chemicals that cause extreme paranoia, hallucinations, delusions, agitation, hypertension, chest pain, headache, and suicidal thoughts when smoked, snorted or injected.

Sold online, in convenience stores, and smoke shops, the dangerous “bath salts” are sold by the names White Rush, Bolivian Bath, Vanilla Sky as well as many others. In New York State, “bath salts” have recently been found at stores near the State Capitol in Albany.

Just as products such as K2 and Spice “incense” are marketed as legal alternatives to marijuana, these products sold as “bath salts” or “plant food” is perceived as legal alternatives to cocaine, LSD, and methamphetamines.

Senator Griffo said, “These so-called ‘bath salts’ are not the same as aromatic bath salts. They contain a potentially lethal mix of synthetic drugs and serve no purpose other than to get the user high. My legislation would ban these dangerous substances so we may help keep our young people safe and give our law enforcement the authority to rid our State of these dangerous drugs.”

S.3322 would add the six chemical compounds to the State’s list of Schedule 1 drugs, thereby classifying each as a controlled substance. Controlled substances are defined as those that have a high potential for abuse and addiction.

S.3322 also has a companion version in the State Assembly. Assembly bill 4769-A is sponsored by Assemblymember Edward Braunstein (D-Bayside). "This issue came to my attention last month when I read reports about violent incidents taking place in several Southern states, which were committed by people having hallucinations after using 'bath salts.' One incident took place in Louisiana, when a 21-year-old man cut his throat and shot himself to death. And in Mississippi, a tragedy occurred when a sheriff's deputy was murdered by a man allegedly under the influence of bath salts. This legislation would ban these dangerous chemicals

before the problem becomes widespread in New York. I look forward to working together with Senator Griffo to pass our legislation which would protect all New Yorkers from the scourge of these dangerous meth-like drugs," Assemblyman Braunstein said.

The measure would add the following chemicals as Schedule 1 drugs: 3,4-Methylenedioxymethcathinone (Methylone), 2,4-Methylenedioxypropylvalerone (MDPV); 4-Methoxymethcathinone; 4-Methylmethcathinone (Medphedrone); 4-Fluoromethcathinone; and 3-Fluoromethcathinone. A person found possessing, manufacturing, or distributing any of these substances would face a class C felony for criminal possession of a controlled substance.

The "bath salts" can contain one or more of the above listed chemicals.

The Upstate New York Poison Center has taken five calls related to "bath salts" abuse this year, however Michele Calvia, RN CSPI, Administrative Director at the Center, cautions that there may be cases related to "bath salts," but not being recognized as such.

The Upstate New York Poison Center's cases include a 22 year old female who reported having hallucinations and feelings of paranoia while snorting the "bath salts" over a three day period. Once she stopped taking the drug, the woman stated she continued to feel restless, shaky, and had insomnia, as well as tooth pain and a sore throat, but refused medical care.

Another call was from a 21 year old male who admitted to snorting "bath salts" over the course of a few days and was brought to the emergency room after stating that he felt shaky and his heart was racing. While he was awake, alert and taking, his heart rate was elevated to a dangerous 144 beats per minute, he was hypertensive, and he was breathing rapidly. In addition to being dehydrated, the young man risked harm to his muscles and kidneys. It

took medical staff six hours to resolve his symptoms.

Nationwide U.S. poison centers have taken 251 calls regarding the so-called “bath salts” this year alone compared with 236 calls about the products in 2010, according to the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

“The stats from the poison centers are alarming and show that the problem of “bath salts” abuse is continuing to rise and is seeping into our own backyards,” Senator Griffo continued. “We must outlaw these dangerous drugs before more of our young New Yorkers are seriously harmed. “

According to the Associated Press, nationally at least one woman overdosed and one man shot himself, both allegedly under the influence of “bath salts”. Other media reports include a host of violent behaviors while under the influence of these substances and an increase in emergency room visits due to people suffering trauma after taking the drugs.

“While I am glad the federal government is also taking steps to ban these dangerous drugs, the state legislation is necessary so we may stop the perilous abuse of so-called “bath salts” before it becomes an epidemic in our State,” Senator Griffo said. “I urge my colleagues in the Senate and Assembly to act swiftly in passing this important legislation.”

New York would be following Florida, Louisiana, and North Dakota in banning the sale of the chemical substances that make up “bath salts” The federal government is also considering a ban on the substances