



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

New York Senate Passes Senator Flanagan's Salvia Divinorum Ban

JOHN J. FLANAGAN March 21, 2011

| ISSUE: **CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES**

In an effort to protect the youth of New York State, Senator John Flanagan today announced that legislation he sponsored to ban the sale of the legal hallucinogen salvia divinorum throughout New York State has passed the New York State Senate.

Senator Flanagan renewed his efforts to ban the dangerous herb following media reports that Ryan Santanna, a 21-year old Roosevelt Island resident, had allegedly been smoking salvia divinorum before apparently leaping to his death earlier this month. This is the same legal substance that pop star Miley Cyrus was allegedly smoking in a widely distributed video clip in December of last year.

Senator Flanagan has been pushing for a statewide ban of the hallucinogen, which is widely claimed to have the same effects as lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), since 2005. Although he has been successful in gaining Senate passage of the ban four separate times prior to this vote, the New York State Assembly has failed to act. He is hopeful, with the sponsorship of Assemblyman Peter Rivera, that the Assembly will act on the bill this year.

“This legislation has passed the Senate four times in the past and it is important that the parents of New York know that their state is standing with them in the fight against drugs. It is time to protect our younger residents from this dangerous substance and impose a ban immediately in New York State before another tragedy occurs,” stated Senator

Flanagan.

“We thank and applaud Senator Flanagan for once again standing up for public health,” stated Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds, Executive Director of the Long Island Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence. “Increasing numbers of young people, encouraged by celebrities, are using salvia and all too often suffering the health consequences. We see salvia used by teenagers looking to avoid positive drug tests and very often this use leads to the use of other drugs including prescription medication and heroine.”

“This substance poses a dangerous threat to young people that use it,” Senate Majority Leader Dean G. Skelos said. “I applaud Senator Flanagan for taking the lead in addressing this problem and I hope the Assembly will join us in passing this bill so it can be enacted into law.”

Salvia divinorum, also known as Diviner’s Sage, Sister Salvia, Ska Maria Pastora or simply salvia, is a psychoactive plant from the mint family and is currently available on the Internet and in stores without age restrictions.

According to the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), salvia divinorum is chewed or smoked to induce illusions and hallucinations, the diversity of which is described by users as similar to those induced by ketamine, mescaline, or psilocybin. It is currently under review by the medical and scientific community to determine if it should be a controlled substance.

While those long-term effects are still being considered, the National Drug Intelligence Center has indicated that they may be similar to those produced by other hallucinogens such as LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) including depression and schizophrenia.

Some abusers also indicate that long-term abuse can cause hallucinogen persisting perception disorder, or "flashbacks." Numerous individuals report experiencing negative effects during their first experience with Salvia divinorum and indicate that they would not use it a second time. Some others report that the drug caused them to become introverted

and sometimes unable to communicate clearly.

Senator Flanagan's legislation, which would go into effect sixty days after becoming law, would subject violators to a civil penalty of up to \$500 per violation.

“We have seen the impact this legal substance can have on our communities and the danger it poses is clear and it is real. This is a destructive legally-sold gateway to further drug use that should be off our store shelves,” stated Senator Flanagan. “Now that the Senate has passed the bill, I look forward to working with Assemblyman Rivera and Assemblyman Carl Heastie, who have been working with my office on this issue, to finally protect families and get this substance off our streets.”

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