



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

## State Senate Passes Valesky Legislation to Fight Embalming Fluid Abuse

DAVID J. VALESKY March 21, 2011

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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.

“More and more, we are seeing violent crime in Central New York and across the nation linked to the use of embalming fluid as a drug,” said Senator Valesky. “This legislation is intended to 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 three years, CNY hospitals have reported a sharp increase in the number 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 legislation (S.657) 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.

“Some of our most violent crime in Syracuse can be directly related to this drug,” said City of Syracuse Police Chief Frank Fowler. “This law will go a long way in assisting our officers to get this drug off the streets and will also help us educate our young people on its adverse effects.”

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.

After being made aware of several violent incidents in Syracuse and Central New York that were connected to the drug, Senator Valesky introduced the legislation.

For example, in 2009, 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 thank Senator Valesky for once again ushering this bill through the Senate,” said Helen Hudson of Mothers Against Gun Violence. “This drug is having a detrimental effect on our community and needs to be taken off the street.”