



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Senator Kennedy Praises Health Department Decision to Ban Synthetic Marijuana

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY March 29, 2012

| ISSUE: **CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES, DRUGS**

State health commissioner issues order to stop the sale of all synthetic marijuana products in New York State

ALBANY, N.Y. – Senator Timothy M. Kennedy, D-58th District, praised today’s [decision from the state Department of Health to ban the sale of all synthetic marijuana products](#) in New York State. The health department’s order comes just days after Senator Kennedy joined colleagues in state government, as well as local law enforcement officials and drug treatment advocates, to call for immediate action from the state to ban the sale and distribution of synthetic marijuana.

“The health department’s order to ban the sale of synthetic marijuana is a long overdue change that will get these harmful chemicals off store shelves before another family is forced to endure a tragedy,” said Senator Kennedy. “For too long, we’ve known where synthetic marijuana is sold, but law enforcement and public health officials couldn’t do anything about it because the state had failed to act when it came to prohibiting the sale and distribution of these dangerous chemicals. That finally changes today with the health department’s order.

“The synthetic drug abuse problem transcends any one neighborhood, group or community,” Senator Kennedy added. “The harmful effects have been felt in towns and cities across the state – in schools where students have used the drugs, in hospitals that have treated users and in police stations where officers are eager to prevent the drugs’ proliferation. The health department’s order to cease sales will help protect our neighborhoods and our young people against synthetic drugs.

“I commend Governor Andrew Cuomo for calling on the Department of Health to ban these dangerous substances, and I thank Health Commissioner Nirav Shah for acting swiftly in issuing the department’s order to cease the sale and distribution of synthetic marijuana.”

Now that the sale and distribution of synthetic marijuana has been banned, Senator Kennedy is pushing for legislation (S.6694) to prevent these drugs from being trafficked underground. The senator is cosponsoring legislation that will establish penalties for the criminal sale and possession of synthetic cannabinoids and substituted cathinones – which are often referred to as “bath salts” and mimic the effects of methamphetamines and ecstasy. This bill also contains provisions to create a synthetic drug amnesty and surrender program to allow these harmful substances to be turned over to appropriate authorities.

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Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate’s 58th District, which is comprised of the towns of Cheektowaga, Eden, Hamburg and West Seneca, the city of Lackawanna and parts of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.