



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Griffo Says State Senate Continues Fight to Ban Designer Drugs

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO May 3, 2012

| ISSUE: **CRIME, DRUGS**



### **Griffo: Senate Action Continues Efforts To Ban Harmful Drugs**

Senator Joseph A. Griffo (R-C-IP, Rome) today applauded Senate passage of a bill, S.6694-A he co-sponsored, to criminalize the sale and possession of synthetic marijuana as a continued step in the effort to ban harmful substances.

“Last year, I was pleased when the Governor gave final approval to legislation that I sponsored to ban the sale, manufacturing, possession and distribution of deceptively-labeled,

hallucinogenic 'bath salts' in New York State. Unfortunately, law enforcement and health professionals identified synthetic marijuana as a health emergency requiring immediate action or we could see a rise in tragic consequences if it's not addressed. We hope that the Assembly and the Administration acts again with the same expediency that we displayed last year. No one doubts that lives are at risk," Griffo said, pledging that he will continue to work with other legislators in Albany to ensure that the state takes pro-active steps to ban substances that are proven health hazards.

While Governor Andrew Cuomo signed Griffo's law to ban the sale of "bath salts" last year, and just last month the New York State Department of Health banned the sale and distribution of synthetic marijuana through an Order for Summary Action, possession of these substances -- which may be purchased outside the state or via the Internet -- continues to be legal.

To address this issue, the legislation goes a step further and criminalizes the possession of these products. Under the provisions of this bill, penalties for the sale and possession of synthetic marijuana and bath salts would be similar to those for marijuana and methamphetamines, respectively. Therefore, sale of these substances to a minor, or on or near school grounds, would constitute a class B felony punishable by up to 25 years in prison.

"Drug abuse is a pervasive problem impacting a growing number of families across our state," Griffo said. "These chemicals are just as dangerous as drugs that already have been criminalized, and we need to continue to take action to protect the health and safety of our communities by banning the sale and possession of synthetic marijuana and bath salts."

Synthetic marijuana or "fake pot" are herbs sprayed with chemicals called "synthetic

cannabinoids.” These products -- including Spice, K2, Cloud 9 and Black 9 -- have dangerous side effects, including rapid heart rate, tremors, loss of consciousness and hallucinations.

“Bath salts,” or “substituted cathinones,” are chemically related to methamphetamines and ecstasy and also cause harmful physical and psychological impacts.

The bill now goes to the Assembly for their consideration.