



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Senators Call On Assembly To Pass Tough Bill On Bath Salts And Synthetic Marijuana

JOHN J. FLANAGAN June 14, 2012

| ISSUE: **CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES**

Following recent news reports that a Central New York woman ingested “bath salts”, allegedly beat her three-year old child and went on a rampage that resulted in her death, Senator John Flanagan (2nd Senate District) was joined by Senator Joseph Griffo (47th Senate District) in calling on the Assembly to pass tough legislation ([S6694](#)) to make it a felony to sell or possess synthetic marijuana and “bath salts”.

“We need to go beyond the ban of selling these ‘legal’ drugs and actually place strong criminal penalties on the sale or possession of ‘bath salts’ and synthetic marijuana,” Senator Flanagan said. “The impact of these drugs is simply devastating. The Senate passed a strong bill and it should be voted on in the Assembly. We owe it to the children of our state and their parents to make sure that we get this legislation enacted this year.”

“Every day we are reading horror stories about the destructive actions of people who ingest “bath salts” or smoke synthetic marijuana,” Senator Griffo said. “The tragic story in Madison County proves that we need to take stronger action to keep these drugs out of our communities. I urge the Assembly to adopt the tough bill passed by the Senate before the session ends.”

In Munnsville, a woman, allegedly high on “bath salts”, beat her three year old son and attacked police who were forced to use pepper spray and a taser to bring her under control. The woman later died as a reaction to the tasing. According to news reports, police said they had been called to the woman’s home before and caught her under the influence of “bath salts”.

This incident follows the actions of a Florida man who viciously attacked another man while reportedly under the influence “bath salts”. In this case, Rudy Eugene viciously mauled another man’s face on a busy highway in Miami in broad daylight. Eugene, who was growling at those who attempted to intervene, ignored a police officer’s pleas to stop the attack and was shot and killed. The police and other sources have pointed to “bath salts” as a reason for the man’s unimaginable action.

While Governor Andrew Cuomo signed a law to ban the sale of “bath salts” last year, and the New York State Department of Health has 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.

The Senate has already passed legislation, sponsored by Senators Flanagan and Griffo, that would criminalize the sale and possession of “bath salts” and synthetic marijuana. The penalties would be similar to those for marijuana and methamphetamines, respectively. 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.

The legislation is sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblyman Cusick (A9781A), but has not been acted on. Instead, the Assembly approved a much weaker bill that would make the sale or possession of “bath salts” or synthetic marijuana a misdemeanor.

Other recent incidents of horrific crimes caused by people using “bath salts” or synthetic marijuana include:

> Earlier this year, Richard A. “Psycho” Velazquez was sentenced to 10 years in state prison and 5 years on parole for his guilty plea to felony counts of assault and strangulation in an attack on a woman and her infant child in Glens Falls, Warren County. He admitted that the synthetic marijuana product he and the victim had been smoking directly contributed to his actions; and

> Last week, a Miami man thought to be high on synthetic marijuana, tried to eat the hand of a police officer and had to be put in restraints and a bite mask.

If you would like to join Senator Flanagan in his efforts to ban the sale and possession of synthetic marijuana and “bath salts”, please [click here](#) to “Join the Fight.”