



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## Senator Klein, Councilman Torres and the Bodega Association of the United States Announce “K.O. K2” Campaign; More Than 1,700 Bronx Bodegas Join Pledge Not to Sell Synthetic Marijuana

JEFFREY D. KLEIN September 21, 2015

| ISSUE: CONSUMER PROTECTION, CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES, SMALL BUSINESS, DRUGS, K-2



*With over 700 visits to Bronx emergency rooms since May, thousands of bodegas band together with Klein & Torres to protect the health and safety of New Yorkers*

*Bodega Association of the USA endorses Klein’s legislation to stop sale of K2 in New York State*

**BRONX, NY - State Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester), Councilman Ritchie Torres (D-Bronx), President of the Bodega Association of the United States (ASOBEU) Ramon Murphy,**

Northeast Regional Director of the National Action Network Minister Kirsten John Foy and Bronx bodega owners today launched the “K.O. K2” campaign and announced that more than 1,700 bodegas have joined the pledge not to sell synthetic marijuana.

Each store participating in the campaign will prominently display a sign in their window indicating that the shop does not sell synthetic marijuana in an effort to “K.O. K2.”

**Senator Klein said:** “The ‘K.O. K2’ campaign is the first coordinated effort by elected officials and store owners to kick K2 out of local shops and remove this poison from our streets. More than 1,700 bodega owners have joined the pledge not to sell synthetic marijuana – marking a major step forward in the fight against synthetic drugs. I’m proud to partner with Councilman Ritchie Torres and the ASOBEU to launch this important campaign and will continue to push for the passage of my comprehensive K2 legislation in the state Senate.”

**Councilman Ritchie Torres said:** “We must take every measure to stop the sale and consumption of K2, a deadly drug that has already taken a tremendous toll on The Bronx. Unfortunately, it is going to take more than legislation to keep this poison out of our communities. I am proud to stand with Senator Jeff Klein and the ASOBEU to announce a coordinated campaign to get K2 out of our stores and off of our streets.”

**Ramon Murphy, President of the ASOBEU, said:** “A bodega is a family run business that serves the community and is part of the community. Dangerous drugs and illicit substances like K2 have no place in our stores and I am proud to announce the ASOBEU’s pledge not to sell K2 in New York State. It’s the ASOBEU’s promise that our customers and the entire community feel safe in our stores. I applaud Senator Klein’s efforts to outlaw K2 and fully support his legislation currently before the State Senate.”

The ASOBEU is comprised of 5,000 members with 35 percent or 1,750 stores located in The Bronx. The “K.O. K2” campaign encompasses all Bronx bodegas but also includes a coordinated, grassroots effort by community groups and local advocates to sign up grocery stores and smoke shops throughout the borough that are not strictly defined as “bodegas.”

**Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj (D-Bronx) said:** "Thank you to the ASOBEU and the store owners that have joined the fight to stop the sale of K2. Families and neighbors will appreciate your efforts to keep our neighborhood safe and keep these dangerous drugs out of arm's reach. This is another step in the right direction to wipe out K2 from New York City."

**New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito said:** "This highly addictive and deadly substance targets our most vulnerable New Yorkers, especially our young people. I commend bodega owners across The Bronx for taking up this fight against K2 to stop it from getting into the wrong hands. With more and more cases of this drug affecting New Yorkers, it's imperative that we get this dangerous substance off our shelves and I thank Senator Klein and my colleagues in government for their efforts."

**Rev. Al Sharpton, president of the National Action Network, said:** "As we fought against the crack epidemic of the '80s we are obligated to head off a potential K2 epidemic that could inflict more profound damage to our communities than crack ever did. This junk is marketed to our children and is literally poison for their brains. We applaud Senator Klein's visionary leadership in addressing this issue for the past several years. We will work with Senator Klein to rid our city and state of this junk and play our part to educate and mobilize people all across New York."

The “K.O. K2” campaign follows a major K2 bust in The Bronx, where more than 200 kilograms of the synthetic drug were seized. This enforcement action underscores the depths of the public health crisis in the borough – with the discovery of a large processing

and distribution center on Light Street in Eastchester.

Earlier this month, Senator Klein released an alarming investigative report, “The Online Smoke Shop,” detailing the K2 drug trade in cyberspace. “The Online Smoke Shop” found a budding market for K2 and its paraphernalia on internet classifieds and auction sites like eBay, Craigslist and Backpage. Many online cannabinoid dealers were also found peddling a slew of toxic ingredients used in the production of K2, including chemicals already banned in New York State like “AKB-48,” 5F-AKB-48” and “MAB-CHMINACA.”

In an effort to combat synthetic marijuana in New York, Senator Klein has introduced legislation in the state Senate that would criminalize the sale of K2. The proposed legislation would add “synthetic cannabinoids” to the pre-existing crimes of selling marijuana under New York State’s penal law and provide five degrees of criminal sale – ranging from class “B” misdemeanor to a class “C” felony – depending on the weight of synthetic cannabinoid sold.

Senator Klein has also proposed cracking down on businesses by increasing penalties for those found selling K2. His legislation would amend the General Business Law to increase fines for businesses found in violation to \$2,000 for the first offense, \$5,000 for the second offense and the third violation would result in the loss of a store owner’s liquor, tobacco and lottery license.

Klein’s legislation would also add an analog statute to the state’s controlled substances law, making any analog of a Controlled 1 or 2 substance illegal. While the state Senate has passed the measure three times, the state Assembly has failed to take action.

**Eugenio Brito, Bronx store owner and member of the ASOBEU, said:** “I’m proud to place a ‘K.O. K2’ sign in my window to let everyone know they will not find this dangerous drug in my store. We’ve all seen the impact K2 is having on our communities and I hope our actions

today inspire other responsible business owners to join this fight.”

**Carlos Herrera, Bronx store owner and member of the ASOBEU, said:** “As a store owner and a member of this community, I am proud to join the pledge not to sell K2. Anything that hurts families and scourges our society like this drug needs to be shut down. I applaud the actions of Senator Klein, Councilman Torres and my fellow members of the ASOBEU for the steps taken today to stop the sale of synthetic marijuana in New York.”

**Adaline Walker-Santiago, Chair of Community Board 7, said:** “Protecting New York’s children and families is the number one priority. I am happy to see that swift action is being taken at the city and state level to remove synthetic marijuana from local stores and take it out of the hands of New York’s most vulnerable populations. I commend Senator Klein, Councilman Torres and the ASOBEU for working to knock out K2 in New York.”

Senator Klein will host a summit on synthetic marijuana on October 9 at Jacobi Hospital. The summit will convene city, state and local leaders on the proliferation of K2 and discuss the depth and breadth of the problem in New York State.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2015-S6040**

#### **K-2**

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- Introduced

- ○ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
  
- Delivered to Governor
  
- Signed By Governor
  
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Prohibits the sale and distribution of synthetic cannabinoids; and establishes a statewide synthetic cannabinoid surrender program

August 26, 2015

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Jeffrey D. Klein

Do you support this bill?

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**2015-S6039**

K-2

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- Introduced
  - ◦ In Committee Assembly
    - In Committee Senate
  - ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
    - On Floor Calendar Senate
  - ◦ Passed Assembly
    - Passed Senate
  - Delivered to Governor
  - Signed By Governor
  -

Criminalizes the sale of synthetic cannabinoids

August 26, 2015

In Senate Committee [Codes](#)

Sponsored by [Jeffrey D. Klein](#)

Do you support this bill?

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**2015-S1640**

K-2

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- Introduced
  
- ◦ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
  
- Delivered to Governor
  
- Signed By Governor
  
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Includes within the schedules of controlled substances, any substances designated as controlled substances pursuant to the federal Analog Act and Controlled Substances Act

January 13, 2015

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Jeffrey D. Klein

Do you support this bill?