



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

Synthetic Cannabinoids Cost New York State and Taxpayers \$22.7 Million: Report

JOHN J. FLANAGAN January 25, 2016



New York State Senate Majority Coalition Leaders Majority Leader John Flanagan (R,C,I-East Northport) and Independent Democratic Conference (IDC) Leader Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) today released a report, **The State of Synthetics: A Review of the Synthetic Cannabinoid Drug Problem in New York & Solutions on Ending the Epidemic**, in advance of the Senate voting on a package of bills to combat synthetic drugs.

As a result of the synthetic cannabinoid use, New York State and its taxpayers footed a \$22.7 million bill in 2015 responding to the public health crisis.

Statewide over 6,800 people were hospitalized as a result of using K2 and 68 percent of those patients used Medicaid, resulting in over \$1.1 million in payouts. Millions have been shelled out on new lab testing, hospital equipment, treatment and medication. A combined \$3 million in city and state dollars were spent on public awareness campaigns.

Synthetic cannabinoid use also resulted in injuries of emergency medical technicians. On nine separate occasions inmates using synthetic cannabinoids punched, kicked, and even bit corrections officers resulting in injuries.

“The spread of synthetic drugs is affecting every community and will continue to destroy lives unless more preventive action is taken. For five years, I have sponsored legislation that has passed the Senate on numerous occasions so that we can hold criminals accountable for the creation of new and dangerous drugs that evade our current laws. It is past time for the Assembly to join us and help put an end to synthetic drugs today,” said Majority Leader Flanagan.

“We must KO K2 from upstate to downstate, and today the Senate will send a strong message that synthetic drugs will not be tolerated in our state. My analog bill will ensure that New York keeps ahead of the chemists’ curve and will ban chemicals that mimic controlled substances as they are tweaked, so the law can no longer be subverted. The Senate has passed this for three consecutive years and the Assembly must take action to protect the citizens of New York State,” said IDC Leader Klein.

“In Onondaga County, synthetic marijuana overdose cases have risen by 580 percent since 2011. We must stop this scourge and educate the public about the danger of synthetic

cannabinoids. My bill will require the State Department of Health to establish a database of these deadly chemicals to better inform the public, retailers and law enforcement about these toxic drugs,” said Senator David Valesky (D-Oneida).

“Dealers often stay one step ahead of the law by tweaking their drugs, which is why we need to put the law in line with the threat to snuff-out Flakka in our communities. With Flakka’s availability on the street growing virtually unchecked, now is the time to crack-down on Alpha PVP before it’s too late. Thank you to my Senate colleagues for their support and to Rochester Assemblyman Harry Bronson for his efforts to take on Flakka in the Assembly,” said Senator Rich Funke (R,C,I - Fairport).

Following the release of the report, the State Senate acted on legislation to eradicate the sale of K2 and other synthetic drugs, including:

- Senator Flanagan’s S.2836C adds the current list of known synthetic cannabinoids to the Schedule I list and creates criminal penalties for possession and sale;
- Senator Funke’s S.4743 adds Alpha-PVP, known as “flakka” or “gravel,” to the public health law Schedule I of controlled substances;
- Senator Klein’s S.1640A amends the Controlled Substances Act to add to the Schedule any analogous drugs;
- Senator Klein’s S.6040A imposes civil penalties on businesses that sell synthetic cannabinoids. On the third violation, a business would lose its state licenses to sell lottery tickets, alcohol, cigarettes and tobacco products for five years; and
- Senator Valesky’s S.6496 requires the Department of Health to maintain an electronic database of known synthetic cannabinoids, listing their compounds, a description of products and their street names.

2015-S2836C

- 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
-

Relates to controlled substances; defines synthetic cannabis

January 29, 2015

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **John J. Flanagan**

Do you support this bill?

2015-S4743

- 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
-

Designates alpha-PVP, its salts, optical isomers and salts of optical isomers, as schedule I stimulant controlled substances

April 15, 2015

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Rich Funke

Do you support this bill?

2015-S1640A

- 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
-

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?

2015-S6040A

- 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
-

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?

2015-S6496

- 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
-

Directs the commissioner of health to establish and maintain an electronic database, accessible to the public, of known synthetic cannabinoids

January 21, 2016

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by [David J. Valesky](#)

Do you support this bill?
