



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

Senate Passes Bills to Combat Synthetic Drug Abuse

DAVID J. VALESKY January 26, 2016

| ISSUE: **SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS, SYNTHETIC MARIJUANA**

The New York State Senate today passed a package of bills to prevent the abuse of deadly synthetic drugs. Synthetic drugs have increased in popularity because their effects are similar to known hallucinogens or narcotics but their chemical structures are slightly altered so restrictions against illegal substances can be evaded.

The 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 also released a report, *The State of Synthetics: A Review of the Synthetic Cannabinoid Drug Problem in New York & Solutions on Ending the Epidemic*, that details the \$22.7 million New York State and its taxpayers footed to respond to this public health crisis in 2015.

Majority Leader Flanagan said, "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."

IDC Leader Klein said, “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. Now, the Assembly must take action to protect the citizens of New York State.”

The bills the Senate acted upon today to eradicate the sale of K2 and other synthetic drugs, include:

- Senator Flanagan’s [S2836C](#) adds the current list of known synthetic cannabinoids to the Schedule I list and creates criminal penalties for possession and sale;
- Senator Funke’s [S4743](#) adds Alpha-PVP, known as “flakka” or “gravel,” to the public health law Schedule I of controlled substances;
- Senator Klein’s [S1640A](#) amends the Controlled Substances Act to add to the Schedule any analogous drugs;
- Senator Klein’s [S6040A](#) 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 [S6496](#) 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.

Senator David Valesky (D, Oneida) said, “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.”

Senator Rich Funke (R-C-I, Fairport) said, “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.”

The bills will be sent to the Assembly.