



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

## Senator Larkin Leads Effort To Combat Synthetic Drugs

WILLIAM LARKIN January 26, 2016



## COMBATING SYNTHETIC DRUGS

Senator Bill Larkin (R, C-39<sup>th</sup> District) voted in favor of a comprehensive bill package that seeks to combat the dangerous synthetic drug epidemic which has had a devastating human toll on local communities, families and individuals throughout our state. In addition to the dreadful human cost, a new report recently released, *The State of Synthetics: A Review of the Synthetic Cannabinoid Drug Problem in New York & Solutions on Ending the Epidemic*, outlined the enormous fiscal cost to taxpayers: \$22 million in 2015 alone. To view the full report, [click here](#).

“Far too many families in the Hudson Valley have witnessed first-hand the damage caused by substance abuse,” said Larkin. “Unfortunately, young New Yorkers today are exposed to an assortment of extremely dangerous synthetic drugs that can be purchased legally. These drugs are ruining lives, destroying families and costing taxpayers millions. This epidemic must be stopped. I am confident that this legislation will help curb synthetic drug use, while punishing those who continue to manufacture and push these harmful drugs.”

According to the report, over 6,800 people statewide were hospitalized as a result of using K2, and 68 percent of those patients used Medicaid, resulting in over \$1.1 million in expenditures. 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. As a result of the synthetic cannabinoid use, New York State and its taxpayers footed a \$22.7 million bill in 2015 responding to this public health crisis.

The legislation that Senator Larkin helped pass to stop the sale of K2 and other synthetic drugs include:

- **S.2836C**- adds the current list of known synthetic cannabinoids to the Schedule I list and creates criminal penalties for possession and sale;
- **S.4743**- adds Alpha-PVP, known as “flakka” or “gravel,” to the Public Health Law Schedule I of controlled substances;
- **S.1640A**- amends the Controlled Substances Act to add to the Schedule any analogous drugs;

· **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

· **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.

“I urge my colleagues in the Assembly Majority to pass this legislation and join our efforts to eradicate these deadly drugs,” concluded Larkin.