



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie: Senate Passes Measures to Crack Down on Drug Abuse

PATTY RITCHIE April 24, 2017



State Senator Patty Ritchie has announced the Senate has passed legislation—including two bills she cosponsors—to help crack down on drug abuse and create safer communities.

Measures approved today include those aimed at curbing abuse of synthetic drugs and “designer” drugs, which in recent years have increased in popularity, because their effects are similar to hallucinogens or narcotics, but their chemical structures are slightly altered and as such, restrictions against them can be evaded.

“Drugs—including synthetic drugs—have the power to destroy lives, pull apart families and threaten the safety of our communities,” said Senator Ritchie.

“Through these measures, we are taking another step toward cracking down on these substances and in turn, protecting the health and safety of people here in our region, as well as across New York State.”

Included among the measures approved today were two cosponsored by Senator Ritchie:

Senate bill S816, which designates Alpha-PVP, also known as “Flakka” or “Gravel” as a controlled substance. Similar to bath salts and methamphetamine, use of this designer drug has been known to cause violent behavior, as well as side effects including nausea, vomiting, paranoia, hallucinations, delusions, suicidal thoughts, seizures, chest pains, and increased blood pressure and heart rate; and

Senate bill S3518, which classifies synthetic marijuana—like K2, Spike 99, Spice—and many others, as Schedule I controlled substances. These legal herb-like products are laced with a synthetic cannabinoid to produce a high similar to existing controlled substances, but with more dangerous side effects, including hallucinations, vomiting, agitation, increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure and other adverse conditions. Not only does the bill provide for the imposition of criminal sanctions on synthetic pot, but also makes it a felony to sell such products to a minor or on school grounds.

The bills were sent to the Assembly.

As a member of the Senate Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, Senator Ritchie has been continuing to work to stop the spread of illegal substances in the region she represents, as well as across the state. In addition to advocating for laws that help crack down on drug abuse and provide help to those looking to break the cycle of addiction, she

has also secured funding—including \$70,000 last year—to provide anti-drug counseling services in schools throughout Jefferson, Oswego and St. Lawrence Counties.