



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Amedore

SENATE PASSES AMEDORE BILL TO CRACK DOWN ON IMPAIRED DRIVING

GEORGE AMEDORE June 4, 2018

Senator George Amedore today announced Senate passage of legislation (S.889) to crack down on drivers who operate a motor vehicle while under the influence of synthetic and boutique drugs, including synthetic marijuana, bath salts, and inhalants.

Under current law, it is illegal to operate a motor vehicle while under the influence of drugs, as defined under Public Health Law. However, recent trends have seen an increase in synthetic, designer, and chemically-altered drugs that are not defined within the current law. This bill closes that loophole and keeps the law up to date so drivers who are impaired by these substances can be held accountable.

“We continue to see an increase in the use of synthetic drugs that can cause great danger if they are used by someone who then gets behind the wheel of a car,” said Senator Amedore. “This bill will help to keep our laws up to date as more and more of these substances make their way on to the market, and ensure that law enforcement officials have the tools to properly punish individuals who use these dangerous substances and make the decision to drive.”

The bill amends the state's Public Health Law to include mind-altering substances that,

when consumed, could result in the same intoxicated condition as alcohol or listed drugs. The expanded definition will provide prosecutors with an increased chance of persuading a court that the chemical substance consumed by a driver had the same level of impairment as if the driver had been using alcohol and/ or other listed drugs.

The bill amends the Vehicle and Traffic Law to codify language from a Court of Appeals ruling (People v. Cruz) that establishes a clear definition of “intoxicated condition” that would be equally applicable to impairment by drugs.

The bill was sent to the Assembly, where it is sponsored by Assemblywoman Aravella Simotas.

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