



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Senator Kennedy Announces Senate Action to Prevent Underground Trafficking of Synthetic Marijuana, 'Bath Salts'

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY April 30, 2012

| ISSUE: **CRIME, CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES, DRUGS**



*Senate passes legislation to establish criminal penalties for the sale and possession of synthetic chemicals that mimic the effects of marijuana, ecstasy or meth*

ALBANY, N.Y. – Senator Timothy M. Kennedy, D-58th District, announced the Senate has taken action to prevent the underground proliferation of synthetic marijuana and substituted cathinones – often referred to as 'bath salts'. This follows a recent Health

Department order which banned the sales of synthetic marijuana in stores throughout New York State.

The State Senate passed legislation – cosponsored by Senator Kennedy – to establish criminal penalties for the sale and distribution of synthetic marijuana and substituted cathinones. With statutes now in place banning synthetic drugs from store shelves, this legislation and the criminal sanctions it carries will help stop the drugs from being illegally trafficked underground.

“Synthetic marijuana had been readily available for legal purchase at corner stores and gas stations throughout New York State. That changed when the Health Department issued its order banning the sale and distribution of synthetic marijuana. Now we need to go a step further,” said Senator Kennedy. “We must ensure these chemicals don’t proliferate through illegal underground trafficking.

“This legislation will establish penalties for the criminal sale and possession of synthetic marijuana and ‘bath salts’ – which have similar effects to meth and ecstasy. It’s long overdue that state lawmakers stand up and empower law enforcement with the tools they need to crackdown on these dangerous drugs. Once this legislation becomes law, it will help prevent synthetic drug abuse and advance our efforts to create drug-free neighborhoods.”

Under this bill, criminal penalties for the sale and possession of these synthetic drugs will mirror the penalties already established for the sale and possession of the drugs they mimic. This legislation adds synthetic cannabinoids and substituted cathinones, based upon their foundational chemical structure, to the Controlled Substances Act. By classifying these substances according to their foundational structure, it should eliminate the often-exploited practice of slightly altering the chemical formulas to skirt laws that prohibit specific substances.

The bill also contains provisions to create a Synthetic Cannabinoid and Substituted Cathinone Surrender Program to allow these harmful substances to be turned over to appropriate authorities.

The legislation now heads to the Assembly for approval.

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*Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate's 58th District, which is comprised of the towns of Cheektowaga, Eden, Hamburg and West Seneca, the city of Lackawanna and parts of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.*