



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Kennedy & Peoples-Stokes Push for Powdered Alcohol Ban, Call New Product Dangerous and Targeted Towards Teens

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY April 9, 2015

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*“Palcohol” is Easy: Easy to Hide, Easy to Sneak into School, Easy to Slip into Drinks. Should be Easy to Ban.*

*Bill Introduced In State Legislature Would Ban Sales of Powdered Alcohol*

BUFFALO, NY – Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) and Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples-Stokes (D-Buffalo) announced today a push to ban the sale of powdered alcohol in New York State, as well as a ban on the possession of powdered alcohol by persons under the age of 21.

Palcohol, which was recently approved by the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB), a federal agency responsible for approving labels for alcoholic products, is a powdered alcohol product intended to be mixed into non-alcoholic drinks, such as juice or soda. Although the product is advertised for use only by adults over age 21, many are concerned that its versatile powder form will make it easy for kids to smuggle into underage settings such as schools, proms or youth centers.

“As the father of three young children, I find it deeply troubling that a product could be on the market which would make it even easier to sneak alcohol into our schools or youth events,” said **Senator Kennedy**. “Assemblywoman Peoples-Stokes and I are calling on our colleagues to move swiftly to ban this dangerous product. In addition, we're calling on distributors and retailers across New York State to join us in protecting our kids by voluntarily refusing to sell this product as our bill works its way through the legislative process. While this product is not intended for use by minors, we all know that alcohol has a tendency to find its way into the hands of underage drinkers. Powdered alcohol would be even easier for kids to sneak into school, put into their drink, or, even worse, slip into another child's drink. We need to ban it before lives are impacted.”

“The sale of alcohol in any form has to be monitored,” said **Assemblywoman Peoples-Stokes**. “Safeguards are in place to ensure minors cannot purchase liquid alcohol; however powdered alcohol is growing in use. This legislation ensures that New York State keeps pace with powdered alcohol use and regulates it appropriately. Alcohol in liquid form purchased legally unfortunately ends up in the hands of minors; powdered alcohol purchased legally is even easier to conceal. Prom and the coming graduation season are peak times for binge and underage drinking, we must do all that we can to ensure the safety of New York's minors.”

“It is important to remember that teens and young adults are the most vulnerable to social pressure and to experiment with addictive substances,” said **Horizon Health Services President**

**& CEO Anne Constantino.** “Misuse of any drugs, including alcohol, can lead to devastating consequences. We need to take this threat to our young people seriously and do whatever we can do to reduce the availability of harmful substances.”

“Kids Escaping Drugs applauds Senator Kennedy and Assemblywoman Peoples-Stokes for sponsoring this legislation to ban the use and distribution of Palcohol to individuals under the age of 21,” said **Kids Escaping Drugs Executive Director Robin Clouden.** “Alcohol is one of the gateway drugs sometimes leading to use of other chemicals. By banning this easily accessible powdered form to minors, all involved are taking the necessary steps to keep this product out of the hands of our children and reduce the potentially harmful impact that could occur. We continue to partner with, and are very proud of the work we have been able to accomplish with our local delegation, advocating for the adolescents we serve.”

“It is important to keep in mind that any new drug on the market should be looked at with scrutiny. The bottom line is that this is about the safety and health of our community and the future of our youth here,” said **WNY United Against Drug & Alcohol Abuse Program Director Beth Anzalone.**

“As a leader in the Prevention Education field for over 65 years, we have seen many dangerous trends in substance use and abuse. Adding a dangerous, accessible and easily concealable powdered form of alcohol to the mix of an array of readily available drugs would be devastating to our youth,” said **Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse’s Executive Director Andrea Wanat.** “The ECCPASA understands the dangers of this drug and supports Senator Tim Kennedy and Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples-Stokes in their push to ban the sale of this product.”

In addition to calling for swift passage of the legislation, **S1352/A4236**, Kennedy and Peoples-Stokes are also urging liquor distributors and retailers throughout the state to voluntarily

refrain from selling this potentially dangerous product while they work to secure its passage. According to a recent report from the Baltimore Business Journal, retailers and distributors in Maryland reached an agreement with the State Comptroller to ban the sale of Palcohol, joining the ranks of Delaware, Louisiana, and Vermont.

The proposed legislation would establish a \$5,000 fine for first-time offenders who are caught selling the product, and a \$10,000 fine for repeat offenders. Additionally, offenders risk losing their license issued by the New York State Liquor Authority. Underage persons found in possession of powdered alcohol would be subject to up to three different punishments, including a fine of up to \$50, up to 30 hours of community service, or the required completion of an alcohol awareness program.

While Kennedy and Peoples-Stokes are pushing for a ban in New York State, United States Senator Charles E. Schumer has also introduced legislation that would ban the production, sale, and possession of powdered alcohol throughout the country.

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