



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## Ortt, Kearns Join Forces to Fight New York's Synthetic Drug Crisis

ROBERT G. ORTT June 17, 2015

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### *Senator Ortt Passes Bill to Broaden Scope of Synthetic Drugs to be Considered Illegal*

"There's no silver bullet when it comes to ending the growing trend of synthetic drugs that's especially popular among young adults," said **Senator Ortt**. "Drug dealers shouldn't be able to change the chemical makeup of a controlled substance, sell it as a toxic synthetic drug, and escape the consequences currently on the books. I commend Assemblyman Kearns for leading this fight in the Assembly to help protect our communities and crack down on drug dealers."

State legislator Mickey Kearns is sponsoring this bill in the Assembly.

"Synthetic drugs are a burgeoning epidemic in America and present a significant risk to New York State," said **Assemblyman Kearns (D – Buffalo)**. "Ingesting a single pill with the active ingredients no larger than the tip of a ballpoint pen has killed young adults. The synthetic substances that have acute toxic and deadly effects are cannabinoids, cathinones, phenethylamines, phenylpiperazines and tryptamines, among others."

Under this bill, selling, using or possessing synthetic drugs, including synthetic marijuana, herbal incense, bath salts, and other substances containing hallucinogenic chemicals, which are not prescribed by a physician, would be a class E felony. These drugs are not currently

covered by the existing statutes. Currently, the sale of existing controlled substances is a class D felony, and possession is a class A misdemeanor.

According to the Association of Poison Control, in 2010, there were 1,300 overdoses in the United States that were directly related to synthetic drugs. In 2011, overdoses numbers exponentially increased to 13,000. Poison Control said more than half the users are younger than 25 years old.