



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Senate Takes Action to Protect Residents from Synthetic Cannabinoids

CATHARINE YOUNG January 26, 2016

| ISSUE: **HEALTH, PUBLIC SAFETY, PUBLIC PROTECTION**

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ALBANY – Synthetic cannabinoids – legal yet dangerous drugs that can have life-altering consequences – have had a devastating impact on communities across our state, hospitalizing more than 6,000 residents and costing taxpayers approximately \$22.7 million in 2015.

As a result of their devastating impact, Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I- 57th District) joined her Senate colleagues this week to pass a package of public-health bills aimed at combating these harmful drugs.

“Synthetic drugs, known by flashy street names like ‘K2,’ ‘Spike’ and ‘Mr. Nice Guy,’ are having severe consequences, especially for young people in our community. Their long-term health consequences are the biggest concern, because it is unknown how these drugs will affect each individual, and the results can vary from person to person,” said Senator Young.

“Drug dealers have been using synthetic drugs to stay a step ahead of the law. Our children should not have access to these potentially deadly drugs and this legislative package will help ensure that these drugs, and those who peddle them, are taken off our streets. We need to continue to fight against this growing public-health crisis, and this should only be our first step,” Senator Young said.

The Senate-approved legislation would identify new drugs that currently evade our existing laws, ban chemicals that mimic controlled substances, and establish a database of these deadly chemicals to better inform the public and law enforcement.

The legislative package included five bills:

- [Senate bill 2836C](#) - Adds the current list of known synthetic cannabinoids to the Schedule I list and creates criminal penalties for possession and sale;
- [Senate bill 4743](#) - Adds Alpha-PVP, known as “flakka” or “gravel,” to the public health law Schedule I of controlled substances;
- [Senate bill 1640A](#) - Amends the Controlled Substances Act to add to the Schedule any analogous drugs;

- [Senate bill 6040A](#) - Imposes civil penalties on businesses that sell synthetic cannabinoids. On the third violation, a business would lose its state licenses to sell lottery tickets, alcohol, cigarettes and tobacco products for five years; and
- [Senate bill 6496](#) - Requires the Department of Health to maintain an electronic database of known synthetic cannabinoids, listing their compounds, a description of products and their street names.

While many users believe that synthetic drugs are safer because they are legal, users can experience raised blood pressure and reduced blood supply to the heart, as well as kidney damage and seizures. Synthetic cannabinoids' addictive nature also is particularly harmful as the drugs do not currently have any medications or therapies tailored for addiction treatment. Thus, users who attempt to stop using synthetic cannabinoids often experience headaches, anxiety, depression and irritability.

The legislative package followed the release of a Senate report, *The State of Synthetics: A Review of the Synthetic Cannabinoid Drug Problem in New York & Solutions on Ending the Epidemic*, that detailed the growing public health crisis and provide efforts to end the use of synthetic drugs.

All five bills have now been sent to the Assembly.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### 2015-S2836C

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- Introduced

- ◦ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Relates to controlled substances; defines synthetic cannabis

January 29, 2015

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by John J. Flanagan

Do you support this bill?