

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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Bill Banning Sale of Kratom to Minors Passes Senate

GENEVA – Senator Pam Helming today announced that legislation she co-sponsors, which would ban the sale of kratom to individuals under the age of 21, passed the Senate this year. Nearly identical legislation Senator Helming wrote, which would ban the sale of kratom to individuals under the age of 18, passed the Senate unanimously last year. However, neither of these bills came up for a vote in the Assembly. These bills would amend the public health law to define and regulate kratom as well as direct the New York State Department of Health to conduct a study on the benefits and risks of kratom.

“For nearly three years, I have spoken with officials in law enforcement, emergency services, public health, education, prevention and treatment services, and other areas, as well as individuals and families struggling with addiction. The addiction crisis continues to plague our communities and devastate our families, and we must work together as a community to find solutions to address this problem. Since learning about the possible risks of kratom during the two Tall Cop Says Stop presentations in our community, I have heard growing concern over the potential risks of using kratom because of its similarities to heroin and opioids. It is important that we regulate and control its sale to minors until we know more about its potential dangers. This bipartisan legislation shows that we take the addiction crisis seriously and want to stop it from spreading. With one-party control of our state government, I was hopeful that this would be the year the Assembly brought this important legislation to the floor for a vote. I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for passing this critical legislation in the Senate urge the Governor and our counterparts in the Assembly to support it next year,” Senator Helming said.

Senator Helming learned about the potential dangers of kratom while sponsoring and attending Officer Jermaine Galloway’s Tall Cop Says Stop presentations at Mynderse Academy in Seneca Falls in September 2017 and at Waterloo High School in October 2018. During the program, Officer Galloway showed participants photos of kratom products attractively packaged and available for purchase in clothing stores popular with our tweens and teens.

Kratom is an opioid-like plant, and it is typically sold as tea leaves, in powder or pill form, for muscle relaxation, to fight fatigue, and as an antidepressant. Despite these many alleged medicinal benefits, the Drug Enforcement Administration lists it as a drug of concern with no medicinal value. Also, the Food and Drug Administration compares kratom to morphine in its

risks for addiction, abuse, and dependence. Several FDA studies are continuing to evaluate the scientific information on kratom, but the FDA warns consumers to not use any products containing kratom until it is better understood. According to the Center for Disease Control, kratom was listed as the cause of death for 91 individuals out of 152 who tested positive for kratom between July 2016 and December 2017.

This legislation would go a long way in keeping kratom out of the hands of children and young adults. Under this legislation, a person who sells kratom to individuals under 21 would face up to a \$500 fine. Suffolk County already bans sales of kratom to individuals under 21, and New York State should follow suit to protect individuals from this substance. Tennessee also bans sales of kratom to individuals under 21, while New Hampshire and Illinois ban sales of kratom to individuals under 18. Sales of kratom are banned in Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Vermont, Rhode Island, Washington, D.C., and Wisconsin.

Senator Helming represents the 54th Senate District, which consists of Seneca and Wayne Counties, parts of Cayuga and Ontario Counties, and the towns of Lansing and Webster. For more information, please visit Senator Helming's [website](#), or follow @SenatorHelming on Facebook or Twitter.

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