

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 22, 2018

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Senator Helming’s Bill Banning Sale of Kratom to Minors Passes Senate

GENEVA – Senator Pam Helming today announced that legislation (S.6924) she sponsors banning the sale of Kratom to minors passed the Senate unanimously. The bill 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.

“Over the last year and half, I have spoken with countless individuals and families about the addiction crisis plaguing our communities. In addition to heroin and opioids, there is growing concern over the risks of using Kratom - whether for recreational purposes or as way of treating other addictions. It is important that we regulate and control its sale to minors until we know more about its possible benefits and risks. This bipartisan legislation shows that we take the addiction crisis seriously. I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for passing this critical legislation without any opposition in the Senate,” **Senator Helming said.**

Senator Helming learned about the potential dangers of Kratom while attending the “High in Plain Sight” Substance Abuse Awareness & Prevention event organized by the Seneca Falls Central School District. Kratom is tropical tree originating in Southeast Asia. Its leaves have been used for many years to relieve pain. While the leaves can be eaten raw, historically they were used to brew pain-relieving tea. Today, Kratom is often turned into capsules, tablets, and liquids. It is marketed to users of all ages. During the High in Plain Sight program, participants were shown photos of Kratom products attractively packaged and available for purchase in clothing stores popular with our tweens and teens.

While Kratom is believed by some to have medical benefits, it is also believed to have a high potential for abuse and addiction. In 2016, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) moved to ban its sale and classify it as a Schedule I drug due to it being an imminent hazard to public safety. This decision was ultimately delayed to allow for further research.

Despite the medical potential, there are serious concerns and unknowns with kratom. Until it is further researched, the sale of Kratom to our children must be regulated. This legislation would do just that, prohibiting individuals under the age of 18 from purchasing or possessing Kratom in any form.

Several states have defined Kratom as a synthetic drug and controlled substance. Countries such as Australia, Finland, Denmark, Poland, Lithuania, and Sweden have made Kratom illegal.

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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