

## Congressman Murphy, State Representative Cook Announce Federal Drug Authorities Will Regulate Synthetic Marijuana Products

Within months of Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) and State Representative Michelle Cook (D-Torrington) bringing the danger of synthetic marijuana products to the attention of the public and the federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the federal agency has announced it will immediately regulate the chemicals in the products.

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Within months of Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) and State Representative Michelle Cook (D-Torrington) bringing the danger of synthetic marijuana products to the attention of the public and the federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the federal agency has announced it will immediately regulate the chemicals in the products.

"Taking these products off the shelves is a no-brainer. The chemicals in these synthetic marijuana products are a public health threat to our kids, and so I'm thrilled that the federal drug authorities have moved quickly to address this problem," said Murphy.

"They have become increasingly popular, particularly among students and young adults, and are simply 'synthetic marijuana'. The chemicals have not been approved for human consumption by the FDA and there is no government oversight of the manufacturing process," said Cook. "I'd like to thank the Torrington Police Narcotics Unit for their advocacy and initiative in getting these products pulled off store shelves. These substances are labeled as incense products and pose a danger to the public when burned and inhaled."

Recently, smokeable herbal products marketed as being "legal" and as providing a marijuana-like high have become increasingly popular, particularly among teens and young adults. These products consist of plant material that has been coated with chemicals that claim to mimic THC, the active ingredient in marijuana, and are sold at a variety of retail outlets and over the internet. These chemicals, however, have not been approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration for human consumption, and there is no oversight of the manufacturing process.

Murphy and Cook learned about the dangers of these products, marketed under names like "Spice," "K2," "Blaze," and "Red X Dawn," after a number of local reports of teens and young adults being treated after taking the substance. Cook

co-sponsored S.B. No. 761, An Act Prohibiting The Sale or Possession of Synthetic Cannabinoids. Murphy sent a letter to the DEA in December requesting that the agency act quickly to regulate the chemicals in these products.

Reactions to "fake pot" include elevated blood pressure, a racing heartbeat, anxiety, agitation and nausea. In fact, according to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, U.S. poison centers have received over 2,000 calls regarding adverse reactions to synthetic marijuana over the past year alone. Some retailers, including USA Food Mart in Torrington, have voluntarily stopped selling these products.

The DEA has chosen to use its authority to immediately regulate the five chemicals used to make so-called "fake pot" products, which makes possessing and/or selling these chemicals or the products that contain them illegal in the United States. This emergency action puts these chemicals in the most restrictive category and will remain in effect for at least one year while the DEA and the United States Department of Health and Human Services further study whether these chemicals should be permanently controlled.

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