



Guest comment

Synthetic marijuana banned in U.S.

by **F. Randall (Randy) Kline**
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After an unnecessary delay in Congress, the Senate passed a ban on the sale of synthetic marijuana commonly sold as "SPICE," K-2, Black Mamba, Potpourri and Herbal Incense.

The federal crackdown is very welcome news. The possession, sale or use of these substances have been illegal in Idaho since July 2011, however numerous shops have continued to sell the synthetic drug in various locations in Idaho.

In court, I often hear that a defendant bought the "SPICE" in Twin Falls, Pocatello or Blackfoot at a specific store. I have always been aggressive in contacting other jurisdictions with that information and several of these shops have, as a result of the tip, been raided. The passage of the bill in the Senate will help close the door on online sales and hopefully will break up the distribution schemes.

A similar bill was passed in the House of Representatives in December 2011. In the Senate the bill had been pending, however Kentucky Senator Rand Paul (R) used a filibuster to block efforts to obtain federal enforcement. New York Senator Chuck Schumer (D) tacked the "SPICE" ban onto a larger Food and Drug Administrative bill to secure passage. Schumer expects the legislation to be on President Obama's desk before July 4 of this year to be signed into law.

In an article in the New York Daily News, May 24, 2012, by Alison Gendar and Heidi Evans, titled "U.S. Senate passes



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federal ban on sale of synthetic pot," the importance of the legislation is discussed.

"Let this be a warning to those who make a profit manufacturing and selling killer chemical components to our teens and children: the jig is up," Schumer said after the vote.

"This bill closes loopholes that have allowed manufacturers to circumvent local and state bans and ensures that you cannot simply cross state lines to find these deadly synthetic drugs," said Schumer. "By passing this amendment today we finally get these poisonous drugs off our shelves and keep our nation's youth out of emergency rooms."

The ban comes after a series of Daily News stories exposed how the so-called fake pot was widely available in corner stores and online under such names as "K2," "SPICE," "Killer Buzz" and "Dead Man Walking."

Emergency room doctors and law enforcement authorities in New York and across the country linked it to panic attacks, elevated blood pressure and hallucinations, and it was blamed in several deaths.

Dierdre Canaday – an upstate New York mom whose 26-year-old son, Aaron, never woke up after smoking a packet of "Mr. Nice Guy" last September – was relieved by the Senate action.

"It's about time," Canaday told the Daily News. "It won't bring back my son but I am hoping it will be a deterrent to destroying other young people and their families' lives."

Authorities said synthetic pot was a growing public health crisis.

