



KENNETH P. ZEBROWSKI
Assemblyman 96th District
Rockland County

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July 19, 2016

Hon. John Flanagan
Temporary President and Majority Leader
New York State Senate
Room 330, State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12247

Re: S.2836-C & A.1910-B

Dear Temporary President Flanagan:

I am writing you regarding the growing problem of synthetic cannabinoid overdoses and our bills that criminalize these substances (S.2836-C & A.1910-B).

The recent report of overdoses at a Brooklyn hospital and the July 15th CDC report on the troubling increase in overdoses is a flashpoint for legislative action. According to the CDC, there were 456 overdoses due to ingestion of synthetic cannabinoids reported at the 101 hospitals used in the study. They warned that these drugs are extremely dangerous and can be anywhere from 2 to 100 times more potent than marijuana. They also noted the disproportionate number of cases in New York State. As the sponsors of legislation that would criminalize these substances, we need to act quickly to protect the public from the dangers that these drugs pose.

Our bills are similar but are not identical. My bill has passed the Assembly for the past 5 years and your bill passed in 2016, 2015, 2013 and 2012. I am asking that we work together over the next few months to reconcile the differences between our bills and pass the new version next session. My legislation (A.1910-B) would add synthetic cannabinoids to schedule 1 of the controlled substance list. The legislation uses the federal definition of the drug and would make possession a class A misdemeanor and sale a class D felony. These penalties are much higher than possession and sale of marijuana, and would ensure that these drugs are off the streets. I believe we have an opportunity to finally criminalize these dangerous drugs.

I would like to set up a meeting with you to see how we can come to an agreement on our bills. I appreciate the work you have done to crack down on synthetic cannabinoids and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Kenneth P. Zebrowski
Member of Assembly

Cc: Assemblyman Joseph Lentol, Chair of Assembly Codes