

State of Kansas
Kansas House of Representatives



Representative Rob Olson
26th District

300 SW 10th Street, Room 561B
Topeka, KS 66612

785/296-7632

Robert.Olson@house.ks.gov

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 11, 2009

For more information, contact:

Rep. Rob Olson
785/296-7632

Capt. Bob Keller
Johnson County Sheriff's Office
(913) 208-4669

LAWMAKER INTRODUCES BILL TO REGULATE MAN-MADE DRUGS

Johnson County Sheriff's Office tests find them stronger than chemicals in marijuana

Topeka – Kansas House of Representative Rob Olson (R-Olathe) announced today he has filed a bill to address concerns regarding the use of unregulated synthetic drugs in Kansas, in particular two found in a smokable herbal product known as K2.

Rep. Olson worked with Kansas law enforcement officers to craft the bill after learning about the two chemicals named JWH-018 and JWH-073. The chemicals are very similar to tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC – the chemical in marijuana that gives users a “high”.

“There is so much that is unknown about these and other unregulated synthetic drugs. To hear that K2 is becoming popular among high school students – that concerns me. So many times a kid will start out with minor drug usage that leads to a lifetime of addiction. My goal with this legislation is to prevent that from happening,” Olson said.

House Bill 2411 would make possession, use, sale and possession with intent to sell of K2 and other products containing synthetic cannabinoids illegal in Kansas.

Johnson County Sheriff's Master Deputy Chris Farkes asked to have K2 analyzed after its' use by high school students exploded last fall.

“It's very concerning because the students don't know what they're getting. They think it's harmless, but someone who uses K2 then drives a car or operates heavy machinery could put themselves and others in serious danger,” Master Deputy Farkes said.

Farkes said the herbal product also is popular with former convicts on probation trying to avoid positive drug tests.

Johnson County Forensic Scientist Jeremy Morris said scientific testing found the intoxicating effects of JWH-018 and JWH-073 are more potent than THC.

“The effects of THC happen when the chemical binds with receptors in the user’s brain, like a key fitting into a lock,” Morris explained. “JWH-018 and JWH-073 are better keys than THC, and therefore, it takes less of them to get you high - and that high will last longer. K2 takes all of the negative effects of THC and heightens them.”

Classified as “synthetic cannabinoids” because of their close relation to THC, Morris said there also are concerns about the long-term effects of smoking JWH-018 and JWH-073.

“Whenever we take a drug or a drug product is smoked, the burning process converts the original chemicals in the product into a host of new combustion products. Those who’ve studied these synthetic cannabinoids are concerned that, when smoked, some of the combustion products could cause cancer,” Morris said.

A number of countries have moved to ban the sale of synthetic cannabinoids or the products that include them – including Argentina, Britain, Canada, Germany, Poland, France, and Russia. Kansas is the first state to consider similar legislation.