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**HOUSE VOTES UNANIMOUSLY FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN'S  
PROPOSAL TO COMBAT SYNTHETIC DRUGS**

***Attorney General's Investigators Conduct New Round of Store Visits, Remove \$33,000 Worth of Synthetic Drugs From Store Shelves in Mason, Fulton Counties***

**Springfield** — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today applauded the Illinois House's unanimous vote to approve an amendment to the Illinois Food, Drug and Cosmetics Act that will help combat the synthetic drug epidemic in the state. The House vote occurred on the same day that investigators with the Attorney General's office joined law enforcement agencies in Mason and Fulton counties to remove almost 2,000 synthetic drug packages worth nearly \$33,000 from area retail stores.

"The dramatic rise of synthetic drug use in Illinois has created a unique and difficult challenge for law enforcement," Madigan said. "My office is working both with the legislature and local law enforcement agencies to provide tools and resources to stop the spread of these potentially deadly drugs."

House Bill 5233 targets the retail sale of synthetic drugs by defining a "synthetic drug product" as one that contains a controlled substance not regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The bill also addresses the fact that these drugs are sold in packages with misleading labels claiming the products are legal. The bill further makes it illegal under the Illinois Food, Drug and Cosmetics Act to sell these drugs and significantly increases the penalty for selling synthetic drug products or misbranded drugs.

"As a former police officer who understands how illegal drugs can decimate communities, I enthusiastically sponsored this legislation on behalf of Attorney General Madigan," said Rep. Costello (D-Smithton). "This legislation directs our focus to those involved in making and distributing constantly evolving drug concoctions."

**Operation Smoke Out in Mason, Fulton Counties**

As House members were acting, investigators from the Attorney General's office and law enforcement agencies in Mason and Fulton counties conducted the latest "Operation Smoke Out" in which 1,822 packages of synthetics worth a street value of \$33,743.95 were relinquished from the following retail establishments:

- Smokers Paradise, 631 N. Main St., Canton and Shandi's, 35 East Side Square, Canton –665 packages valued at \$13,882.44;
- Happy Hour Liquors, 324 W. Dearborn, Havana – 926 packages valued at \$13,890;
- The Brick Tavern, 202 S. Oak St., Bath – 10 packages valued at \$150; and
- Farmington Gas, 600 E. Fort St., Farmington – 221 packages valued at \$5,821.51.

Canton Police Chief Don Taylor noted that Tuesday's operation occurred on the same day that the city council is scheduled to adopt an ordinance that specifically bans the sale and possession of synthetic drugs.

"We appreciate the cooperation, guidance and information sharing as we approach this new law enforcement situation," said Havana Police Chief Kevin Noble. Mason County Sheriff Wayne Youell concurred, while Farmington Police Chief Fred Winterroth said he was especially pleased with the results of the visit to his city.

"It was the only retailer not previously checked and we were able to remove the synthetic drugs from their shelves," Winterroth said.

Since Operation Smoked Out was launched in December 2011, 8,313 packages of synthetic drugs and bath salts with a street value of \$160,522.95 have been relinquished.

The store sweeps are part of Madigan's ongoing effort to address the growing use of synthetic drugs, particularly among teens and young adults. Poison Control Centers across the country have reported a dramatic increase in calls about synthetic marijuana and "bath salts," another type of synthetic drug that contains chemical compounds that mimic the effects of cocaine or methamphetamine. In 2010, Poison Control Centers nationwide received 2,915 calls related to synthetic marijuana use. That figure jumped to 6,890 calls in 2011. Reports of bath salts were made 303 times to Poison Control Centers in 2010. A year later, the centers received 6,072 calls about bath salts.

States, including Illinois, initially responded to the rise of synthetic drug use by passing laws that banned specific formulas of synthetic marijuana and bath salts. Drug makers attempted to sidestep these laws by replacing the banned chemicals with new formulas. A new Illinois law that went into effect on Jan. 1, 2012, takes a broader approach and bans all chemicals that are structural derivatives of the previously banned chemicals.

Prior to that law going into effect, Attorney General Madigan hosted the first-ever statewide emergency summit in November 2011 in Springfield to help increase awareness of synthetic drugs with state, county and local law enforcement officers as well as educators, health care professionals and parents.

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