



STATE OF CONNECTICUT



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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RB 5029 AN ACT CONCERNING METHAMPHETAMINE

The Department of Public Safety supports this bill.

Methamphetamine, or meth, is the most commonly abused type of amphetamine; its use has grown rapidly and spread across the country in recent years. Meth use can lead to anxiety, insomnia, convulsions, stroke, cardiac arrhythmia, paranoia, hallucinations and episodes of uncontrollable rage. In many areas of the country, meth use has reached epidemic proportions. The resources of local and state governments are being strained by efforts to deal with the physical, mental and social consequences of addiction to methamphetamine. The Connecticut State Police have been aware of the methamphetamine threat for a number of years. The Statewide Narcotics Task Force has attended many training and awareness sessions in and out of the State of Connecticut and has presented numerous training and awareness sessions. We have watched and prepared as the threat has crossed the United States from the West Coast to the Northeast. While the rest of the country exploded with methamphetamine incidents, there were only small incidents in Connecticut until last year. Significant exposure to this scourge came during 2005 when four separate incidents occurred. A significant amount of meth was seized in the course of shipment through our state, while two meth labs in East Hampton and one small lab in New Fairfield were dismantled.

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While the consensus of many who have addressed this issue is that an epidemic does not exist in Connecticut at the present time, steps such as those in this bill must be taken now to avert a potentially devastating problem in the not too distant future. In proposing **RB 5029 AN ACT CONCERNING METHAMPHETAMINE**, Governor Rell has provided the framework to address this problem in Connecticut and prevent it from reaching epidemic proportions.

One factor that has led to the rise in use and popularity of methamphetamine is the fact that it can be easily manufactured in clandestine laboratories using readily-available ingredients, many of which you could probably find around your house. Paint thinner, drain cleaner, starter fluid, gasoline, match heads, antifreeze and lye contain some of the components that are "cooked" into an ingestible form for the user in a highly-volatile process that endangers the person performing it, anyone nearby, and the environment.

The key components in the manufacturing process of methamphetamine, however, are the drugs ephedrine, pseudoephedrine and phenylpropanolamine. These drugs can be extracted from many over-the-counter products, such as cold medicines, and are an essential part of the finished product. Because they do not require a prescription, access to these precursor drugs by meth manufacturers has been unrestricted. They are easily stolen, even in large quantities, from the shelves of drugstores where they sit unattended, or can simply be purchased in any amount desired.

This bill would require designation of the precursor substances that are used to make methamphetamine in Schedule V as controlled substances, thereby reducing the opportunity for the illicit production within the state. The enactment of similar laws in other parts of the country has proven extremely effective, resulting in a dramatic decrease in incidents of meth labs. While designation as a schedule V controlled substance would provide stricter controls, the committee might consider adopting language similar to that proposed in **RB 5476 AN ACT CONTROLLING THE SALE OF METHAMPHETAMINE**. That bill would require that the any person selling these drugs (1) store such drug products or combination of drug products in a location that is inaccessible to consumers, and (2) require consumers to request and purchase such drug products or combination of drug products at the counter. This approach would provide the necessary public safety protections without making consumer access for legitimate purposes unduly burdensome. If the committee amends this bill to adopt the approach contained in Raised Bill 5476, it is recommended that an additional safeguard be added of limiting sales to a maximum of 9 grams of active ingredients per sale.

The expansion of 21a-277 is specifically necessary to address the incidents of the manufacture of methamphetamine. Several of the processes include readily available household chemicals, which by themselves are useful for household purposes, but become dangerous and toxic agents when placed in solution or processed in methamphetamine production.

Many of these chemicals and by-products present serious health risks to innocent children, families and communities through residential, ground and aquifer contamination. Collection, decontamination and remediation are expensive and extremely involved processes.

This bill proposes an increase in the penalties for operating a drug lab and the manufacture of methamphetamine at any stage. This increase is commensurate with the consequences of these crimes and is an integral part of our efforts to combat this issue before it becomes an epidemic.

The environmental remediation of methamphetamine labs is an extremely costly one. Estimates range from \$5,000 per incident and upwards, depending on the extent of the contamination. Having a dedicated fund for remediation paid for by the offender places costs of cleanup where they belong and re-enforces the commitment that the State of Connecticut has to address to the entire problem.

The agency would suggest two technical changes to the drafting of Section 1 of the bill, which amends Section 21a-240 of the general statutes by adding subsection (59) as noted below (deleting "substitutes," and adding "substituted" and changing 'or' to 'and'):

(NEW) (59) "Methamphetamine-type substances" include methamphetamine and structural analogs including methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDMA) and other [substitutes,] substituted phenylethylamine compounds, their salts, isomers and salts of isomers, and chemical compounds which are similar thereto in chemical structure [~~or~~] and in physiological effect, and which show a like potential for abuse, which are controlled substances under this chapter, unless modified.

The reason for the first change is that while another drug, such as cocaine, might be considered a "substitute" for MDMA, it is not a "substituted phenylethylamine". "Substituted phenylethylamine compounds" has a specific meaning in the chemical world, implying by inference Amphetamine, Methamphetamine MDA, MDMA, MDEA, etc.

Leaving the word "or" opens the door for thousands of structurally unrelated compounds, many of which are legal medications (both OTC and prescription) that can produce symptoms identical to those caused by MDMA. If the definition is overly-inclusive, it fails to provide differentiation and specificity for the (target) amphetamine group.

Sincerely,



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COMMISSIONER