

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
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Council Unanimously Passes Attorney General’s Bill Making it Easier to Fight Synthetic Drugs in the District

Attorney General’s SAFE DC Act Provides Additional Tool against Cannabinoids, Cathinones

WASHINGTON, D. C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine thanked the D.C. Council for their unanimous passage today of legislation creating one of the nation’s most comprehensive synthetic drug statutes. The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) [introduced the Synthetics Abatement and Full Enforcement Drug Control Act \(“SAFE DC”\) last fall](#), incorporating best practices in enforcement from multiple jurisdictions around the nation.

“I want to thank the Councilmembers for their unanimous support of this important legislation, which Judiciary Committee Chairman Kenyan McDuffie moved on our behalf,” Attorney General Racine said. **“This bill will help the District lead the way in fighting these dangerous drugs, which can induce immediate, psychotic and deadly reactions. Today’s legislation makes it easier for law enforcement officials to get these drugs off our streets.”**

Synthetic cannabinoids (often known by street or brand names like “Bizarro” and “Scooby Snax”) and synthetic cathinones (known by street or brand names like “Flakka” and “bath salts”) are manufactured compounds designed to alter the mental state of the user. However, they are illegal and often contain untested chemicals that can induce dangerous and even deadly effects in users.

SAFE DC strengthens law enforcement officials’ ability to test for and prosecute cases against sellers and distributors of these substances by adding them to the District’s controlled-substances list based on the *class* of the chemical compounds contained in the drugs rather than the *individual* compound found in a particular substance. This makes it easier to outlaw, test for, and prosecute sellers of these drugs.

SAFE DC resulted from collaboration between [OAG’s Emerging Drug Trends Task Force](#) and the District’s

Department of Forensic Sciences (DFS). **“DFS Director Dr. Jenifer Smith and Dr. Luke Short, Manager of the DFS Biomonitoring and Analytical Chemistry Unit, were instrumental in helping us propose this legislation. I want to thank them for their hard work and collaboration to make our residents safer from synthetic drugs,”** Attorney General Racine said.

He added: **“I would also like to thank the members of OAG’s Emerging Drug Trends Task Force – Argatonia Weatherington, Habib Ilahi, Melissa Shear and Marta Markowska – for their extensive efforts to study how we could best improve the District’s drug laws to fight these fast-changing substances. This legislation is largely a result of their excellent work.”**

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