

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Criminal Justice Committee

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BILL: SB 204

INTRODUCER: Senator Wise

SUBJECT: Controlled Substances

DATE: January 4, 2011

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Erickson	Cannon	CJ	<b>Pre-meeting</b>
2.			HR	
3.			JU	
4.			BC	
5.				
6.				

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**I. Summary:**

The bill schedules several synthetic cannabinoids or synthetic cannabinoid-mimicking compounds in Schedule I of Florida’s controlled substance schedules. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) recently indicated its intent to temporarily place these substances in Schedule I of the federal controlled substance schedules.<sup>1</sup> The effect of the federal scheduling is that the substances can no longer be legally sold by retailers and possession and sale of these substances would be a federal crime. The effect of Florida scheduling is that arrests and prosecutions under Florida law may be made for possession and sale of these substances.

This bill substantially amends sections 893.02 and 893.03, Florida Statutes. This bill reenacts sections 893.13(1), (2), (4), and(5), 893.135(1)(l), and 921.0022(3)(b), (c), and (e), Florida Statutes, to incorporate the amendment to section 893.03, Florida Statutes, in references thereto.

**II. Present Situation:**

The DEA has provided the following information regarding synthetic cannabinoids (often referred to by the slang terms “K2” or “Spice”):

Synthetic cannabinoids have been developed over the last 30 years for research purposes to investigate the cannabinoid system. No legitimate non-research uses have been identified for these synthetic cannabinoids. They have not been approved by the U.S.

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<sup>1</sup> “Schedules of Controlled Substances: Temporary Placement of Five Synthetic Cannabinoids Into Schedule I,” Federal Register, Vol. 75, No. 226, November 24, 2010 (<http://frwebgate3.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/PDFgate.cgi?WAISdocID=A2yMds/0/2/0&WAIAction=retrieve>) (last accessed on December 23, 2010). All information for this analysis is from this source unless otherwise indicated.

Food and Drug Administration for human consumption. These THC-like synthetic cannabinoids, 1-pentyl-3-(1-naphthoyl)indole (JWH-018), 1-butyl-3-(1-naphthoyl)indole (JWH-073), 1-[2-(4-morpholinyl)ethyl]-3-(1-naphthoyl)indole (JWH-200), 5-(1,1-dimethylheptyl)-2-[(1R,3S)-3-hydroxycyclohexyl]-phenol (CP-47,497), and 5-(1,1-dimethyloctyl)-2-[(1R,3S)-3-hydroxycyclohexyl]-phenol (cannabicyclohexanol; CP-47,497 C8 homologue), are so termed for their THC-like pharmacological properties. Though they have similar properties to delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) found in marijuana and have been found to be more potent than THC in animal studies. Numerous herbal products have been analyzed and JWH-073, JWH-018, JWH-200, CP-47,497, and cannabicyclohexanol have been identified in varying mixture profiles and amounts spiked on plant material.

The DEA found that these substances have “a high potential for abuse, no currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States and are not safe for use under medical supervision.” Based on the DEA findings, these substances appear to meet the criteria for scheduling under Schedule 1 under both federal and Florida law.<sup>2</sup> The DEA has indicated its intent to temporarily place these substances in Schedule I of the federal controlled substance schedules.<sup>3</sup>

Currently, these substances are not controlled substances under Florida law and possession and sale offenses are not generally applicable, though it has been reported that the Polk County Sheriff’s Office recently arrested several retailers for violation of Florida’s imitation controlled substance statute, s. 817.564<sup>4</sup>. It remains to be seen whether convictions will occur under these statutes, and if they do occur, whether they will be upheld if subject to appellate challenge.

The DEA indicated that “[t]he emergence of these synthetic cannabinoids represents a recent phenomenon in the designer drug market.” “The popularity of these THC-like synthetic cannabinoids has greatly increased in the United States and they are being abused for their psychoactive properties.” The substances are “[p]rimarily found laced on plant material” and “are also being abused alone as self-reported on Internet discussion boards.” “The most common route of administration of these synthetic cannabinoids is by smoking, using a pipe, water pipe, or rolling the drug-spiked plant material in cigarette papers.”

The DEA stated that “products containing these THC-like synthetic cannabinoids are marketed as ‘legal’ alternatives to marijuana and are being sold over the Internet and in tobacco and smoke shops, drug paraphernalia shops, and convenience stores.” Further, “a number of the products and synthetic cannabinoids appear to originate from foreign sources and are manufactured in the absence of quality controls and devoid of regulatory oversight.” “The marketing of products that contain one or more of these synthetic cannabinoids is geared towards teens and young adults. Despite disclaimers that the products are not intended for human consumption, retailers promote

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<sup>2</sup> See s. 893.03(1), F.S.

<sup>3</sup> The final order, if issued, will be effective on the date of publication of the order in the Federal Register. It is the DEA’s intent to issue such a final order as soon as possible after the expiration of thirty days from the date of publication of the notice of scheduling and the date that notification was transmitted to the Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

<sup>4</sup> Curtis, Henry Pierson, “Imitation marijuana: More than dozen arrested in Polk County for selling ‘legal weed,’” *Orlando Sentinel*, November 18, 2010 ([http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2010-11-18/news/os-fake-pot-arrests-polk-county-20101118\\_1\\_synthetic-marijuana-small-gasoline-stations-legal-weed](http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2010-11-18/news/os-fake-pot-arrests-polk-county-20101118_1_synthetic-marijuana-small-gasoline-stations-legal-weed)) (last accessed on January 2, 2011).

that routine urinalysis tests will not typically detect the presence of these synthetic cannabinoids.”

The DEA further stated that abuse of these substances or products containing these substances “has been characterized by both acute and long term public health and safety problems”:

- These synthetic cannabinoids alone or spiked on plant material have the potential to be extremely harmful due to their method of manufacture and high pharmacological potency. DEA has been made aware that smoking these synthetic cannabinoids for the purpose of achieving intoxication and experiencing the psychoactive effects is identified as a reason for emergency room visits and calls to poison control centers.<sup>5</sup>
- Health warnings have been issued by numerous state public health departments and poison control centers describing the adverse health effects associated with these synthetic cannabinoids and their related products including agitation, anxiety, vomiting, tachycardia, elevated blood pressure, seizures, hallucinations and non-responsiveness. Case reports describe psychotic episodes, withdrawal, and dependence associated with use of these synthetic cannabinoids, similar to syndromes observed in cannabis abuse. Emergency room physicians have reported admissions connected to the abuse of these synthetic cannabinoids. Additionally, when responding to incidents involving individuals who have reportedly smoked these synthetic cannabinoids, first responders report that these individuals suffer from intense hallucinations. Detailed chemical analysis by the DEA and other investigators have found these synthetic cannabinoids spiked on plant material in products marketed to the general public. The risk of adverse health effects is further increased by the fact that similar products vary in the composition and concentration of synthetic cannabinoids(s) spiked on the plant material.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, as of November 23, 2010, “at least 11 state legislatures and another six state agencies have taken action to outlaw the use of these drugs.”<sup>6</sup>

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill amends s. 893.02, F.S., the definitions section of ch. 893, F.S., to define the term “homologue” as “a chemical compound in a series in which each compound differs by one or more alkyl functional groups on an alkyl side chain.” The term “homologue” appears in the scheduling nomenclature of one of the substances scheduled by the bill.

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<sup>5</sup> “[T]he American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) has reported receiving over 1,500 calls as of September 27, 2010, relating to products spiked with these synthetic cannabinoids from 48 states and the District of Columbia.” It is unknown how many of those calls were to Florida poison control centers. There have been several media reports of persons having to go to the hospital after use of synthetic cannabinoids. *See e.g.*, Repecki, Tiffany, “Cape teen hospitalized after smoking ‘synthetic marijuana,’” *Cape Coral Daily Breeze*, November 3, 2010 (<http://www.cape-coral-daily-breeze.com/page/content.detail/id/520354.html>) (last accessed on January 3, 2011) and Wyazan, Sam, “Teenagers treated after smoking ‘K2 Spice’ substance,” *Tallahassee Democrat* (abstract), June 30, 2010 (<http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/tallahassee/access/2074740741.html?FMT=ABS&date=Jun+30%2C+2010>) (last accessed on January 3, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> “Synthetic Cannabinoids (K2),” National Conference of State Legislatures, updated November 23, 2010 (<http://www.ncsl.org/?tabid=21398>) (last accessed on January 3, 2011).

The bill also amends s. 893.03, F.S., to schedule the following synthetic cannabinoids or synthetic cannabinoid-mimicking compounds in Schedule I of Florida's controlled substance schedules:

- 2-[ (1R, 3S) -3-hydroxycyclohexyl] -5- (2-methyloctan-2-yl) phenol, also known as CP 47, 497 and its dimethyloctyl (C8) homologue.
- (6aR, 10aR) -9- (hydroxymethyl) -6, 6-dimethyl-3- (2-methyloctan-2-yl) -6a, 7, 10, 10a-tetrahydrobenzo [ c ] chromen-1-ol, also known as HU-210.
- 1-Pentyl-3- (1-naphthoyl) indole, also known as JWH-018.
- 1-Butyl-3- (1-naphthoyl) indole, also known as JWH-073.<sup>7</sup>

The bill also reenacts ss. 893.13(1), (2), (4), and(5), 893.135(1)(l), and 921.0022(3)(b), (c), and (e), F.S., to incorporate the amendment to s. 893.03, F.S., in references thereto.

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2011.

#### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

#### **V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

The scheduling of synthetic cannabinoids as provided in the bill should not impact retailers if the DEA's emergency scheduling of these substances goes into effect before the bill's effective date because federal scheduling would require the removal of these substances and prohibit their sale.

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<sup>7</sup> The bill does not include 1-[2-(4-morpholinyl)ethyl]-3-(1-naphthoyl) indole (JWH-200). This substance is included in the DEA's proposed emergency scheduling of certain synthetic cannabinoids.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

The Criminal Justice Impact Conference has not yet met to consider the prison bed impact, if any, of the bill. A preliminary estimate by the Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR)<sup>8</sup> is that the bill has a potentially insignificant prison bed impact.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Additional Information:****A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

**B. Amendments:**

None.

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This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

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<sup>8</sup> Staff communication with EDR staff, January 3, 2011.