

Feinstein, Grassley: Penalize Drug Dealers Who Market Candy-Flavored Drugs to Children

Written by Grassley Press

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Washington—U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), co-chairs of the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, today introduced the *Saving Kids From Dangerous Drugs Act of 2013* [link] to increase federal criminal penalties for drug dealers who entice children with candy-flavored methamphetamine, cocaine or other dangerous drugs.

According to law enforcement officers and drug treatment officials, methamphetamine and other illegal drugs are being colored, packaged and flavored in ways designed to attract children and other minors. Some have child-friendly names like Pot Tarts and Reese's Crumbled Hash Brownies.

“For years, drug dealers have used new gimmicks to target children by flavoring and marketing illegal drugs to taste and look like candy and soda,” Senator Feinstein said. **“These dealers intentionally mislead young customers into believing these drugs are less dangerous and less addictive than other illegal drugs.”**

“This bill responds to this serious and dangerous problem by increasing criminal penalties on drug dealers who alter controlled substances in a deliberate attempt to lure our youth into addiction and dependency.”

“Anything that makes a dangerous drug seem less dangerous to kids is a serious problem,” said Senator Grassley. **“The law should make clear that marketing drugs to**

kids will have steep consequences.”

Many recent incidents have involved methamphetamine, which can cause users to experience hallucinations and delusions. In March of last year, police in Chicago warned parents about a strawberry-flavored version of methamphetamine called “strawberry quick” or “strawberry meth.” Because of the drug’s similarity to candy, police urged parents to tell their children not to take candy from anyone, even a classmate.

The size and sophistication of operations involving flavored or candied drugs is alarming. For example, in March of 2008, Drug Enforcement Administration agents seized cocaine near Modesto, Calif., valued at \$272,400; a significant quantity had been flavored with cinnamon, coconut, lemon and strawberry.

Under current federal law, there are no enhanced penalties for altering controlled substances to make drugs more appealing to youth. *The Saving Kids From Dangerous Drugs Act:*

- Provides an enhanced penalty when any adult knowingly or intentionally manufactures or creates a controlled substance listed in Schedule I or Schedule II that is:

- o Combined with a beverage or candy product;

- o Marketed or packaged to appear similar to a beverage or candy product; or

- o Modified by flavoring or coloring.

- Subjects anyone who alters a controlled substance in these ways to the following

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penalty, in addition to the penalty for the underlying offense:

- o Up to 10 years for the first offense

- o Up to 20 years for a second or subsequent offense

The bill has been endorsed by the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the Major County Sheriffs Association, the National District Attorneys Association and the National HIDTA Directors Association.

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