

Testimony  
Chief Frank Fowler  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
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Thank you Chairman Walden, Ranking Member Pallone, and distinguished Members of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. I am here today to paint you a picture of community that has been ravaged by synthetic drug abuse. Beginning in 2013, the Syracuse Police Department (SPD) responded to an increase in the use and subsequent overdoses of synthetic marijuana (spike). SPD implemented various means of tracking the problem in addition to the police enforcement efforts. In 2015, Syracuse saw the largest number of overdoses from use of synthetic marijuana; the largest number of overall calls for service, calls for service related to overall overdoses and persons down; and also made the largest number of arrests related to this substance. While the department took steps to get these drugs off the street, new chemical formulations of “spike” were being put in

circulation. In addition, all the SPD could do to someone selling this dangerous drug was to give them an appearance ticket for local law violation.

This is just one example of the dangerous synthetic compounds that are flooding our streets. Toxic, synthetic drugs are designed to mimic street drugs like marijuana, LSD, cocaine, ecstasy and other hard drugs. They can be more potent than the real thing and often times are more deadly. In addition, these drugs are not simply effecting the users. My officers and other first responders are put in harm's way simply by coming in contact with these often lethal substances. As a local law enforcement official, we need H.R. 2851, the SITSA Act, introduced by Congressman John Katko. This bill takes a big step towards eradicating these harmful substances and protecting our communities.

SITSA will give my officers the tools they need to target synthetic substances and the criminals who distribute and traffic them. Under this bill, a drug such as "spike" could be temporarily or permanently

added to a new schedule under the Controlled Substances Act in as little as 30 days after the chemical compound has been identified.

The abuses of synthetic drugs are not simply confined to my jurisdiction. Colleagues of mine from across the country are dealing with the same issues and have expressed the need for a solution. H.R. 2851 is that solution. I urge this committee to pass this bill and give us the tools we need to combat this deadly epidemic.

Thank you again for the opportunity be here, I welcome your questions.