



# ***NEWS RELEASE***

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY McMASTER  
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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Contact: Mark Plowden  
803-734-3670  
[mplowden@ag.state.sc.us](mailto:mplowden@ag.state.sc.us)

## **House Looks at Tough New Meth Laws**

### **Brady legislation controls access to drug's key ingredients**

**Columbia, S.C.** – A sub-committee of the state House of Representatives is considering legislation that will have a dramatic impact on the way the state is able to fight the exploding problem of methamphetamine (Meth) use and production.

Columbia Representative Joan Brady has sponsored legislation requiring all medicines containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine as the sole active ingredient (which are commonly used as the main ingredient in Meth) to be placed behind store counters to better control their sale and to prevent theft. The number of packages of these medicines allowed to be sold at one time would be restricted to three (3). A form of government-issued identification and signature would be required for purchase of these products.

The bill is supported by law enforcement but faces stiff opposition from special interest groups representing merchants and chain drug stores. Similar legislation has become law in Oklahoma, Virginia, and Georgia, and is currently being considered by other states.

“The meth problem has grown to virtual epidemic proportions in our state,” said Brady. “As we have seen in other states, controlling access to its key ingredient will make it harder to manufacture in these dangerous homemade meth labs that seem to be sprouting up all over the state.”

At the request of Attorney General Henry McMaster, Representative Brady has also added several new criminal penalties related to the possession of and byproducts from manufacture of meth.

“Meth is the kudzu of illegal drugs, it’s spreading at a fast pace and it’s everywhere.” McMaster said. “I commend Representative Brady on the strong stand she has taken to send the message that South Carolina will not tolerate this hazardous activity, especially around our children.”



- The bill introduces new penalties for the possession of “methamphetamine precursor drugs” (over-the-counter products containing pseudoephedrine, ephedrine, or like substance), various household chemicals, and other substances with the intent to create the volatile mixture that produces Methamphetamine. Any person in possession of any two (2) or more substances (listed in the new law) with the intent to manufacture Meth would be guilty of a felony, punishable to five (5) years imprisonment and or a \$5,000 fine for the first offense. The penalty for a second or subsequent offense would be doubled.
- The bill would introduce penalties for Drug Related Child Endangerment against any adult who would cook Meth or store any of the hazardous ingredients, paraphernalia, etc. in the presence of children. If an adult is caught in possession of Meth, or in any stage of the Meth manufacturing process, with a child present in any way - before, during, or after - that adult could face jail time for endangering the child. Under the new law, a first offense for Drug Related Child Endangerment would be a felony carrying a penalty of five (5) years imprisonment and/or a \$5,000 fine. A second felony offense would carry a penalty of ten (10) years imprisonment and/or a fine of \$10,000.
- The new law would also make possession with intent to distribute any product containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine that has been altered from its original form (i.e., powdered, liquefied, or crushed) a crime.
- Any person convicted of Meth-related offenses that required an emergency or environmental response (as in a lab explosion or contamination) would be required to pay restitution to all public entities involved in that response for their services. This amount would be added to any other fines or penalties required under law.
- There is also a provision in the proposed law that makes participation in the disposal of wastes from the manufacture of Meth a felony, punishable to five (5) years in prison and/or a fine of \$5,000. The penalty would double for a second or subsequent offense.

McMaster added that this legislation compliments the Meth Watch program being implemented by his office. Meth Watch is a voluntary education, training and public visibility program involving law enforcement and retailers designed to deter the theft or illegal purchase of common household products used in the illicit manufacturing of methamphetamine. Meth Watch: [www.scattorneygeneral.com/scmethwatch](http://www.scattorneygeneral.com/scmethwatch)

H 3591 is currently being considered by the Health and Environmental Affairs subcommittee of the [Medical, Military, Public and Municipal Affairs](#) Committee. Members of the subcommittee are Rep. David J. Mack III, Chair, Rep. Lester P. Branham, Jr. and Rep. Nikki Haley. The subcommittee is scheduled to hold its third meeting next week.

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