

U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (MO-08) has introduced legislation to add 15 cathinone stimulant drugs to the list of Schedule I substances subject to seizure and prosecution by law enforcement, saying the "bath salt" drugs are comprised of dangerous chemicals which can easily be changed slightly to evade authorities.

"We have to keep up with drug dealers and manufacturers who are trying to stay one step ahead of law enforcement, and that means being aggressive about stopping the drug trade that targets our children. Who knows what chemical is going into their bodies when they get their hands on these drugs – it's not the person using it or the person selling it – which makes this a very dangerous situation," Emerson said.

A federal and local effort to target cathinone drugs last week netted arrests and seizures in 31 states. They can be found over-the-counter in some retail establishments as well as being available from drug dealers and criminal networks.

"Despite the recent success of the operations against bath salt drugs, many more dangerous substances are out there simply because they cannot be identified and enforced by the officers trying to keep these drugs off the market," Emerson said. "This legislation would expand their ability to counteract other drugs which are just as prevalent and just as dangerous."

Emerson has repeatedly met with local and state authorities to discuss the problem.

"Cathinone stimulants are sold in little brightly-colored plastic boxes or packets that honestly look like they are being marketed as candy. Every tool in the toolbox must be available to parents and to law enforcement to get between our children and these bath salt drugs which are being marketed to them by dealers and pushers. It starts by knowing what's in the substances and what the packaging looks like. I hope this legislation gets the attention of concerned legislators who want to do something to help the situation," Emerson said.