

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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SPONSOR STATEMENT FOR CSSB20

"An Act Classifying U-47700 as a schedule IA controlled substance; classifying tramadol and related substances as a schedule IVA controlled substances; and providing for an effective date."

SB 20 would update the State of Alaska controlled substance list by adding two drugs. First, SB 20 would classify U-47700, a synthetic opioid commonly known as pink or U4, as a schedule IA controlled substance. Secondly, SB 20 would add tramadol, an opioid pain medication available through prescription as a schedule IVA controlled substance.

U-47700 was a research chemical created and patented in the United States in the 1970's. It was never tested on humans and was not manufactured for public consumption. Drug labs in China now produce this drug and sell it online to people who purchase it as an inexpensive alternative to other drugs. This synthetic opioid is eight times more potent than morphine and according to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) it is the cause of 46 overdose deaths from 2015 to 2016. The State of Alaska Epidemiology Bulletin has attributed U-47700 to three drug overdose deaths in Alaska.

Tramadol was created by a German drug company in 1962. Tested for over 15 years, it was approved for the foreign market in 1977. Tramadol is widely prescribed for pain relief and became available in the United States in 1995. Because of its low dosage—approximately one tenth the strength of morphine—Tramadol was thought to be a benign pain reliever. However, as prescriptions have risen in the United States there are more and more reports of Tramadol dependency, abuse, withdrawal, and stealing of this prescription medication.

The DEA temporarily scheduled U-47700 as a schedule I controlled substance in 2016. Tramadol was classified as a schedule 4 controlled substance in August of 2014. Should SB 20 pass, Alaska State Statutes will be up-to-date with the federal scheduling of these two substances. This bill will allow drug enforcement agencies to limit the unlawful sale, use, purchase, possession, manufacture, transport or delivery either drug in the State of Alaska.