

Dear Honorable Members of the New York Legislature,

As a member of the bodybuilding community who has worked as a certified personal trainer for the past 6 years, I am writing to register my strong support for New York State A431 Bill, "Relates to establishing restrictions on the sale of over-the-counter diet pills and dietary supplements for weight loss or muscle building," introduced by the New York State Assembly. It is critical to support this to protect children from the unsafe effects of these largely underregulated products. This can be done by simply restricting their sale to those 18 or older.

Speaking from my experience as a former teenage athlete and a current personal trainer who often works with teenagers, children and teenagers who have extraordinary fitness aspirations will often try to find the easiest route to achieve their goals. Often, they search for steroids and other performance enhancing drugs. When they cannot access them due to federal and state regulations, they turn to the supplement industry. I have seen many teenagers use weight loss supplements, which results in poor side effects; these supplements are addictive and can have lasting effects years after steady use.

Many of these weight loss supplements are loaded with stimulants and laced with prescription drugs; there have been plenty of cases of athletes failing drug tests due to supplements laced with prescription drugs. For example, professional mixed martial arts fighter, Yoel Romero, tested positive for steroids without ingesting any to his knowledge. When he brought his supplements to the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), one of his supplements was found to be laced with steroids. When he sued the supplement company, he won for damages. This happens more often than you would think and supplements get recalled after years on the market.

Adults can make educated, conscious decisions about what supplements they put in their body and the risk associated with them, but teenagers are not mature enough to make life altering decisions like this. Most supplement companies agree and often put a label on their products stating that it is not intended for use by children under 18 years old. However, children can still walk into a supplement store and purchase one of these products. Regulation that places these supplements behind the counter limits minors from accessing them without limiting the freedom that adults have to buy them. This is why I, and many other athletes in the fitness industry, support NY A431.

Sincerely,



Vito Frank Leonardo
Certified Personal Trainer
WNBF Professional Bodybuilder

Cosigners



Emmanuel Laflotte
WNBF Professional Bodybuilder
Certified Personal Trainer



Orlando Collado
NPC Amateur Bodybuilder
Fitness Coach



David Plasse
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