



Senate Fiscal Agency  
P.O. Box 30036  
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

## BILL ANALYSIS



Telephone: (517) 373-5383  
Fax: (517) 373-1986

Senate Bill 996 (as introduced 4-12-22)  
Sponsor: Senator Stephanie Chang  
Committee: Committee of the Whole

*(Senate-passed version)*

Date Completed: 4-14-22

### **CONTENT**

**The bill would amend Article 7 (Controlled Substances) of the Public Health Code to prohibit a person from selling or offering for sale an object specifically designed for inhaling nitrous oxide for recreational purposes knowing that the object would be used to inhale nitrous oxide for recreational purposes.**

Section 7453 of the Code prohibits a person from selling or offering for sale drug paraphernalia knowing that the drug paraphernalia will be used to plant, propagate, cultivate, grow, harvest, manufacture, compound, convert, produce, process, prepare, test, analyze, pack, repack, store, contain, conceal, inject, ingest, inhale, or otherwise introduce into the human body a controlled substance.

Before a person is arrested for a violation of Section 7453, the Attorney General or a prosecuting attorney must notify the person in writing, within two business days before the person is to be arrested, that he or she is in possession of specific, defined material that has been determined by the Attorney General or prosecuting attorney to be drug paraphernalia. The notice also must request that the person refrain from selling or offering for sale the material and must state that if the person complies with the notice, no arrest will be made for a violation. If a person complies with the notice, the compliance is a complete defense in a prosecution under Section 7453, as long as the compliance continues.

Under the bill, a person also could not sell or offer for sale an object specifically designed for inhaling nitrous oxide for recreational purposes knowing that the object would be used to inhale nitrous oxide for recreational purposes. The notification provisions described above also would apply to a person who was in possession of specific, defined material determined to be an object specifically designed for inhaling nitrous oxide for recreational purposes.

(A person who violates Section 7453 is guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by up to 90 days' imprisonment or a maximum fine of \$5,000, or both.)

The bill would take effect 90 days after its enactment.

MCL 333.7453

### **BACKGROUND**

Nitrous oxide (also commonly known as "laughing gas") is a colorless nonflammable gas that is commonly used for sedation and pain relief. It also is a food additive, specifically an aerosol spray propellant, used in reusable whipped cream dispensers and cooking sprays. "Whippets"

(also spelled "whippits" or "whip-its") are a slang term used to describe the steel aerosol containers filled with nitrous oxide used for charging whipped cream cannisters. Although nitrous oxide is most often used for pain relief, it also can be used recreationally to induce temporary intoxication or euphoria. Reportedly, one of the popular methods people use to gain access to the nitrous oxide contained within a whippet is to release the gas into a balloon, which warms the gas and makes it easier to inhale. "Crackers" are flashlight-sized items that are used to pierce a whippet and allow the user to quickly transfer the gas into a balloon for inhalation.

Legislative Analyst: Stephen P. Jackson

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill could have a negative fiscal impact on State and local government. New misdemeanor arrests and convictions under the bill could increase resource demands on law enforcement, court systems, community supervision, and jails. However, it is unknown how many people would be prosecuted under the bill's provisions. Any additional revenue from imposed fines would go to local libraries.

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco, Jr.

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.