



## **To fight war against meth, California needs multi-state, real-time pseudoephedrine sales block**

By George Runner

METH is a big problem here in California, and we need to work together to win the war on this deadly drug. Meth is a powerful drug. Perhaps no illegal drug has had a more damaging impact on our state in recent years than methamphetamine.

It wreaks havoc on families, increases crime, places our children in danger and destroys the health of citizens. This is a relatively new battle front in the war on drugs and winning this fight should be a top priority for all Californians.

While serving in the state Legislature I worked closely with law enforcement, retailers and labor to enact laws that make it more difficult for criminals to produce meth. We passed good laws that have made a difference. I continue to support new ways we can eradicate meth from our state.

Right now legislation is pending that would provide California law enforcement with a proven new tool in the fight against meth. The technology, called National Precursor Log Exchange (NPLEx), blocks unlawful pseudoephedrine (PSE) purchases right at the sales counter and allows police officers to monitor criminal activity in real time.

Currently, pharmacists and other retailers record, in writing, information about each person who purchases medicines containing PSE, an ingredient used to produce meth. This is time consuming and provides limited assistance to law enforcement.

Under the real-time, stop-sale system, law enforcement officials would be able to track down and prosecute criminals without making the lives of Californians who follow the law more difficult.

To say that this system has been a success is an understatement.

This technology has an established track record and blocked thousands of attempted purchases in the 21 states that have adopted it. We don't have to wonder if it will work. We know it works.

It has been so effective, in fact, that the National Sheriffs Association passed a resolution in 2009 calling for implementation of just this type of multi-state system. Real-time, electronic technology gives us the information we need to fight and win against the criminals who are peddling meth to Californians.

The system blocked more than 2 million illegal sales of PSE from taking place in 2011. In a state as large as California, that number would be significantly higher.

The sad fact is that drug dealers and users will always try to find a way to get their hands on illegal drugs. But there is a common sense solution that can help stop lawbreakers at the counter, provide law enforcement with critical information, and still allow workers and families access to the medicines they need to remain active and productive.

This type of technology is a tool to help us keep our communities safe and free of meth. We need to minimize meth production in California and this technology needs to be enacted to help us do that.

I am hopeful that my colleagues and other California leaders will join me in supporting legislation to implement this cutting-edge system. Law enforcement officials from around the country have had success using NPLEx to reduce the production of meth. California should do the same.