

**North Carolina Department
of the Secretary of State**

NEWS

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Tim Crowley (919) 814-5342

Liz Proctor (919) 814-5341

**Elaine F. Marshall
Secretary of State**

Counterfeits Concealing THC-Laced Gummies and Snacks Seized Around the State

RALEIGH – A Secretary of State-led enforcement action has swept nearly \$224,000 worth of THC-infused gummies and snacks concealed by counterfeited brands off store shelves in North Carolina.

Trademark Enforcement Agents with the Secretary of State’s Office and the NC Anti-Counterfeiting Task Force worked with local authorities and other state law enforcement agencies on the coordinated enforcement effort.

“Our agents launched this coordinated enforcement effort after seeing a growing trend of THC-infused gummies and snacks concealed in packaging counterfeiting popular snack brands marketed to children. These are brands that kids can easily pick up and consume without knowing what’s really in it,” NC Secretary of State Elaine F. Marshall said Thursday.

Counterfeited brands ranged from Skittles and Cheetos to Lifesavers and Girl Scout Cookies.

“This goes to the heart of our work to protect health and safety,” said Secretary Marshall. “Earlier this year a 4-year-old boy in Virginia tragically died after eating THC-infused gummies, so the fact that so many of these products were counterfeiting brands geared toward kids is very troubling.”

While the packaging on the THC edibles included markings indicating the snacks included THC, Secretary Marshall notes that those markings could be easily overlooked. THC is the compound that gives marijuana its narcotic effect.

The counterfeited snacks were seized from a variety of establishments, from vape shops to convenience stores and gas stations, as a result of 23 search warrants and 30 consent searches. Counterfeit items with a total estimated retail value of \$223,824 were seized.

Secretary of State Agents worked with authorities including Police Departments in High Point, Roxboro, Belmont, Clayton, Gaston County, Jacksonville, Selma, Smithfield, Wake Forest, as well as the Wake County Sheriff's Office, the NC Alcohol and Law Enforcement Division, Asheville ABC Board Law Enforcement Division, the Consumer Brand Association, Vaudra International and Homeland Security.

Secretary Marshall applauded the interagency cooperation in this coordinated enforcement effort. "Following a recent Anti-Counterfeiting Task Force Training conducted by the Secretary of State's Office where these products were highlighted, I was pleased that many of our partner agencies took action on this serious health hazard. I thank each of our partners in this important enforcement operation."

The North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State has the statutory duty to enforce laws that protect the holders of state and federally registered trademarks. Suspected counterfeit goods can be reported to the Secretary of State's Office at anticounterfeit@sosnc.gov.

