

Senators target Internet narcotics

June 5 2011, By MICHAEL GORMLEY , Associated Press

(AP) -- Two U.S. senators said Sunday they will ask federal authorities to crack down on a secretive narcotics market operated on the Internet with anonymous sales and untraceable currency.

Heroin, [cocaine](#) and methamphetamines are among the drugs being sold in the well-protected website apparently operating for just a few months.

Sens. Charles Schumer of New York and Joe Manchin of West Virginia, both Democrats, said they asked the Justice Department and [Drug](#) Enforcement Administration to shut down and investigate the website, often referred to as the Silk Road after an ancient Asian trade route.

"This audacious website should be shut down immediately," Manchin said.

"Never before has a website so brazenly peddled illegal drugs online," Schumer said. "By cracking down on the website immediately, we can help stop these drugs from flooding our streets."

The senators planned to release their letters to the agencies on Sunday.

A key to the illicit trade is use of a network by buyers and sellers that conceals their identity.

Websites including Gawker have reported on the site.

Schumer said the website began operating in February and uses "layers"

of secrecy to thwart authorities. Sellers are told to make shipments in vacuum-sealed bags to avoid drug-detecting dogs.

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Citation: Senators target Internet narcotics (2011, June 5) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-06-senators-internet-narcotics.html>

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