

**Michigan House Hearing Testimony for SB 57 and 58
Whippet WipeOut Campaign History – Vision and Mission
February 2, 2024, 2: 00 PM**

In July 2020, when Ideal Group employees returned to Ideal headquarters after the COVID lockdown, the Whippet (N2O) cartridge littering was Southwest Detroit's major environmental, safety, and public health issue. Thousands of Whippets (N2O silver and brightly colored three-inch cartridges sold as Whipped Cream chargers) littered our Southwest Detroit streets, parks, and walkways creating public safety issues for pedestrians and vehicles.

We learned that most residents and visitors did not know what they were seeing. The Nitrous Oxide in Whipped Cream Chargers is one of the famous "party" inhalant drugs. You may also hear them referred to as "whippits" or "whip-its." The drug gets its name from whipped-cream aerosol canisters that people open to inhale the nitrous oxide inside. These drugs create a high that lowers one's mental and physical pain. They can be addictive and physically harmful.

Whippets (N2O) have become more popular as a recreational drug because they are an FDA-approved product for making whipped cream. People could legally buy them in their local convenience stores, gas stations, smoke and sex shops, and Southwest Detroit, the ever-popular dollar stores.

Why were Whippets popular recreational drugs during the COVID-19 lockdown besides being readily available?

- Users did not have to deal with illegal drug dealers.
- The product has FDA Approval
- Recreational users may have used Nitrous Oxide aka (Laughing gas) in the Dentist's Office. Patients must know that a trained professional carefully creates an N2O and oxygen mixture for dental patients and carefully monitors the patient and the levels during the procedure.

Why and how did Ideal Group and Southwest Detroit begin the Whippet WipeOut Campaign Coalition? Ideal Group came to Detroit in 1995 with the mission of being able to grow our company and create Southwest Detroit family-sustaining jobs.

In the 1990's, Ideal Group worked with local organizations to clean up our Southwest Detroit Neighborhoods. When the city had little or no trash collection in our Southwest Detroit neighborhoods, Ideal Group organized quarterly clean-ups, complete with volunteers, and placed corporate-sponsored dumpsters on neighborhood blocks.

Ideal Group historically worked with local organizations to help increase the high school graduation rate. We were a part of the founding of Detroit Cristo High School, a Catholic college prep high school built on a Corporate Work Study (Intern Program) for underserved youth. We moved our focus to building intern programs to help Southwest youth become community leaders, skilled trades, college graduates able to launch family sustaining careers.

Our Corporate Founder and Chair, Frank Venegas, was angry at the predatory marketers and stores targeting multi-generational members of our Southwest Detroit families as potential N2O users. They were the primary people that Frank wanted to help launch successful careers and organizations. Frank at once delivered a **Call to Action** to our community and the **4th Precinct**.

In July and August 2020, Ideal Group, four Detroit Cristo Rey Alums, and a local environmental non-profit sponsored a six-week volunteer pilot pick-up and Whippet educational program. During that time, seven to ten volunteers and organizations collected over 25,000 whippets off our nearby-neighborhood streets, sidewalks, and parks.

The pilot program taught us that non-users needed help understanding or knowing about the Whippet recreational huffing and puffing and the harm it could cause their bodies. It became clear that our small, effective coalition required more capacity than this small group to make the impact needed to reduce the litter in the 48209 and 48210 zip codes. (The Ideal Group Community footprint)

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We learned that a group of concerned Southwest Detroit residents and organizations led an earlier campaign that collaborated with Senator Chang and produced a 2017 Michigan law that made it illegal to sell Whipped Cream N2O containers to those under the age of eighteen.

Armed with this information, we invited potential partners, including Southwest Detroit schools, major Southwest Detroit non-profits including Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation, the 4th Precinct, The City of Detroit's Health Department, Law Department, Fire Department, the Detroit Police Department 4th Precinct, engaged the Southwest Detroit Business Association's firm Marx Layne in an educational public relations process, and an out-of-state Drug Prevention Non-Profit, Reality Tour, CANDLE, INC. Senator Stephanie Chang and her staff agreed to attend coalition's monthly Zoom meetings.. **The Whippet WipeOut Coalition Campaign launched October 2020.**

For two years, The Southwest Detroit Whippet WipeOut Coalition Campaign worked on education and clean-up and engaged The Detroit City Council and Michigan Legislature. The City of Detroit in early 2022 passed an ordinance to make it illegal to sell FDA-approved whipped cream containers for recreational use. Senator Chang and her colleagues are driving progress on making it unlawful to sell huffing accessories that aid the inhaling of nitrous oxide out of whipped cream containers.

The Whippet WipeOut neighborhood and family education and clean-up programs have been effective. We see fewer three-inch cartridges in our neighborhoods. However, the manufacturers have now introduced various sized party-sized containers. Whippet WipeOut volunteers cannot safely recycle the multi-use larger containers. We are continuing the education program and limited clean-ups of what we can reclaim. Overall, the coalition has recycled over 60,000 Whippet Cartridges; the coalition gas about five hundred cylinders that we have collected and are storing in the outdoors until we can find a recycling solution.

Thank you for your kind attention. We urge you to carefully listen to our presenters today and to help Senator Stephanie Chang and Senator Joseph Bellino influence the Michigan House to pass SB 57 & 58.

Best Regards,

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Whippet WipeOut Coalition Resource List

- Website – Vision and Mission: <https://weareideal.com/whippet-wipeout-campaign/>
- Detroit Health Department Nitrous Oxide Fact Sheet: https://weareideal.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Nitrous-oxide-10-18-21_final-draft.pdf
- Detroit City Ordinance 2021 banning the sale of whippets for Recreational Use: https://weareideal.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Nitrous-oxide-10-18-21_final-draft.pdf
- WXYZ Channel 7's March 2022 Video: https://www.wxyz.com/news/7-in-depth/community-groups-push-education-clean-up-of-whippets?fbclid=IwAR0_7Mn-BkVD9C2g1udiNHZUcqCcgx7WJCbsk64KtCy9_NSzINMIR4rdF5Q
- Whippet Policy Ordinance Research: <https://weareideal.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Whippet-Policy-Research-1.pdf>
- Spanish and English Whippet Informational Flyer: <https://weareideal.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Whippet-Wipeout-Flyer-Detroit-Health-Department.pdf>
- WXYZ Channel 7 January 2023 in depth Video for Whippets Inhalant Week: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oo2I4KlRCM>
- CANDLE, INC Whippets – N20 Health & Planet Risk: <https://candleinc.org/whippets-whip-its-laughing-gas-n20/>
- WXYZ Channel 7 October 2023 in depth Video Following Senate September 2023 Hearing: <https://www.wxyz.com/news/region/detroit/mission-to-wipe-out-use-of-dangerous-inhalant-gaining-traction-as-whippet-wipeout-coalition-hits-lansing>