

Senator wants to make ticket ‘bot’ buying illegal

By **Dave Greber, News 4 Reporter** Published: September 21, 2015, 6:38 pm

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) — Most have seen scalpers in person, holding signs outside concerts or sports venues offering to sell tickets — most at a premium price. But fans of Paul McCartney found a different type of scalper when they tried to buy tickets late last month for his tour stop in Buffalo.

Tickets from places like Ticketmaster or First Niagara Center were gone in minutes, forcing would-be concert goers to pay thousands of dollars on secondary sites if they wanted to attend the Oct. 22 show.

The reason comes down to internet commerce, and a practice that at this point, is still legal. Online scalpers use computer programs or software, called “bots,” to snatch up tickets to popular events within seconds.

Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-NY, announced Monday legislation he’s introduced to make bot ticket buying illegal across the country. It’s already illegal in 14 states, although that doesn’t include New York.

Concert promoters say the practice is so popular, as much as 40 percent of all available tickets to events like Paul McCartney are going to online scalpers or secondary outlets like StubHub.

“Unfortunately, in a community like this, just at face value, a lot of the tickets are barely affordable,” said Tod Kniazuk, executive director of the Arts Services Initiative of Western New York. “When you multiply that by the number of times these scalpers are selling these tickets, it becomes untenable. It’s one of two things. Only the most wealthy can afford the tickets, or people have to scrape together so much money to go to these shows that they’re then unable to afford tickets to other shows.”

If approved, the new law would fine the bots user 1,000 dollars for each ticket sold. A similar bill would levy the same fine for secondary sellers. Schumer says the bill has bi-partisan support and should be adopted by the end of the year.

Not in time to help local McCartney fans, unfortunately.

<http://wivb.com/2015/09/21/senator-wants-to-make-ticket-bot-buying-illegal/>