



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Thank You Senator Doyle, Representative Taborsak, members of the General Law Committee, I would like to thank you today for the opportunity to speak to you today in strong support of House Bill 5360, An Act Prohibiting the Sale of Certain Dangerous Substances, Items and Products to Minors and Prohibiting Certain Persons From Allowing Minors to Possess Alcoholic Liquor in Dwelling Units and on Private Property, and for raising this bill which will strongly benefit the health and welfare of our State's children.

Currently in the State of Connecticut, any person that is under the age of 18 can not purchase any tobacco products. We have set stiff penalties for selling and distributing tobacco to minors, we have provided funding for anti-tobacco public service announcements, and we promote in our schools a tobacco and drug free lifestyle. We here in the State Capitol, have done wonderful and amazing things to keep cigarettes and other tobacco related products out of the hands of minors. For all these controls one particular aspect of smoking has gone vastly unnoticed.

Minors can go into any convenience store, consignment shop, tobacco store, head shop etc. purchase items such as pipes, bong, rolling papers, cigarette papers, and bowls. I found this shocking that while we control the sale of tobacco itself, we do not control the items used to smoke. If a minor is able to procure tobacco, then the very tools used to smoke are not restricted whatsoever. This, to me, is basically saying "You can't buy the gun but here are 100 bullets". The facts are clear, for all the controls we put in place, sometimes, minors are able to obtain tobacco, and when they do, the sky is the limit on what they can buy to smoke it with. This is unacceptable and we must not allow this to happen

An even scarier scenario is if a minor is able to procure drugs. While rolling papers, bowls etc. are designed for tobacco use, they are typically used for the smoking of marijuana, and recently more popularized synthetic cannabinoids such as salvia. While the legislature banned salvia sales in Connecticut, and marijuana is still a banned substance, both these intoxicants can still, potentially, wind up in minors hands. We need to make it more difficult to use these banned substances by prohibiting the sale and possession to minors the tools in which they could use to smoke. Just like with tobacco the sky is the limit on which way minors want to smoke, and these

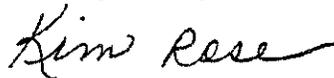
highly addictive substances can affect their grades, social life, and even their relationship with their parents. If we keep the tools out of their hands then minors would be denied the guns and the bullets.

The State levies fines against those proprietors that sell to minors and this sweeping piece of legislation would also levy fines against the sale of the paraphernalia. Let's take this a step further. Let's introduce something that would introduce a bit of personal responsibility. I propose that we add to this bill that not only fines the seller, but fines minors that are found to be in possession. This may also serve as an even greater deterrent. A \$500 dollar fine may cause a 16 year old in possession of one of the items that this legislation bans, to destroy the item or perhaps even think twice about attempting purchasing it to begin with.

Current statutes 53-34(b) and 53-344(c) contain the language and fines that are currently in use. The only change is that we are including tobacco paraphernalia. We need to add (b) No person shall sell any substance, item or product listed in the regulations adopted pursuant to subsection (a) of this section to a person under the age of eighteen years. The only addition to 53-344 (c)'s language would be to include possession in private settings. This statute currently only applies to public property.

We all work hard to prevent these illegal substances from reaching the hands of minors; now let us fight this war on two fronts. Let's work together to help provide and promote a drug and tobacco free existence not only to adults, but to the future. Children are our future; they represent the best of what Connecticut will have to offer our country. Let's make that future promising and healthy for everyone. Thank you for allowing me to provide this testimony on a subject that I care so deeply about, and at this time I can answer any questions that you might have.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kim Rose".

Kim Rose
State Representative