



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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Wednesday March 2, 2016
Public Health Committee
Public Testimony
S.B. 290

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 290

Good Afternoon Co-Chairs Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter; Ranking Members Senator Markley, Representative Srinivasan; and esteemed members of the Committee.

My name is Tim Ackert and I represent the 8th District which includes Columbia, Coventry, Vernon and Tolland. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to speak on S.B. 290 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SALE AND PURCHASE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS, ELECTRONIC NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND VAPOR PRODUCTS AND SIGNAGE CONCERNING THE USE OF SUCH PRODUCTS AND SYSTEMS.

I am here to specifically speak on raising the age for the purchase of tobacco products. I believe it's time Connecticut takes a proactive approach to reducing smoking and the best way is to keep those at an impressionable age from starting. As we age and get more mature, we make better health decisions and the decision not to smoke leads to a healthier lifestyle. Additionally, the economics of not smoking free up income for other financial obligations.

I know the question may arise, "what will the impact have on Connecticut's budget for not collecting sales tax for the sale of tobacco products from these young people?" I believe it's a positive impact toward the overall state economics to have healthier people that can make a greater positive contribution to society. This state has not made a true push to reduce smoking with the funds received from the tobacco settlement. These funds have been used to balance the budget rather than its intention to discourage people from smoking.

I hope you will look favorably on raising the age to purchase tobacco products as Hawaii did, and many prominent cities like Boston, Cleveland, Kansas City, and New York City.