

My name is Nicole Ernsky, and I live in Naugatuck, Connecticut.

I am submitting my written testimony in support of SB 219: An Act Concerning Indoor Tanning.

I am a 27 year old health and wellness manager, who works to help improve others' lives across the United States. I am asking your committee to support SB 219 which would raise the age from 17 to 18 for persons using indoor tanning equipment.

I started using indoor tanning beds when I was 16 years old. I was self-conscious of my very pale skin, and was finally able to convince my mother to allow me to use the beds for special occasions, like homecoming or prom. Soon special occasions turned into much more often- just like the rest of my peers were doing.

When I was just 20 years old I went to the dermatologist for another issue, when I mentioned a 'freckle' which while I was convinced I always had- my mother was insistent that it was new. The dermatologist took a biopsy of this 'freckle' and called me back in a few days later telling me this was not an innocent freckle like the many the covered my body, but in fact harmful, life threatening Melanoma. I can recall the feeling of devastation as I sit in the office by myself, a college student who still had my whole life ahead of me. I was one of the lucky ones, my Melanoma was caught just in time that surgery to remove it and regular visits to an Oncologist were able to tackle it. But so many others are not so lucky, according to the American Cancer Society about 9,320 people are expected to die of Melanoma in 2018. But many of these cases, including mine could have possibly been prevented had the habit of indoor tanning not been developed so young.

By increasing the age of indoor tanning use to 18, children will not be able to subject themselves to the harmful effects which go along with indoor tanning beds. I ask that you support this bill to help protect Connecticut Teens.