



City of Bridgeport

## Department of Health & Social Services

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### TESTIMONY OF MARITZA BOND SUBMITTED TO PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE ON MARCH 16, 2018

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#### TESTIMONY SUPPORTING SB164 Raising the Legal Age To Purchase Tobacco To Twenty-One

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I would like to thank the Public Health committee leadership and members for providing me with the opportunity to comment in **support of SB 164, A Raising the Legal Age for Purchase and Use of Tobacco Products**, on behalf of the Bridgeport Department of Health & Social Services (BDHSS). The Bridgeport Department Health & Social Services aims to promote and protect the health of the people of Bridgeport through the provision of essential health services, monitoring of programs, enforcement of laws and ordinances, and collection of health information. Promoting policies that will protect residents from developing chronic conditions in the City of Bridgeport is a priority within our strategic plan.

Ensuring that access to tobacco products are age appropriate is essential on safeguarding the health of youth in Connecticut. Across the country we have seen efforts to ensure that proper policies are in place for tobacco products. The tobacco sales age is currently 21 in California, Hawaii, Maine, New Jersey, and Oregon. Many major cities have increased the sales age as well, including New York City, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Portland (Maine), Albany (New York), and both Kansas Cities. For over 60% of both Massachusetts and New York, the tobacco sales age is now 21.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Toll of Tobacco in CT<sup>2</sup>:

- 10.3% of high school students smoke
- 7.2% of high school students use e-cigarettes
- 1,300 kids under the age of 18 become new daily smokers each year
- 27% of cancer deaths in CT are attributable to smoking
- 4,900 CT adults die each year from their own smoking
- 56,000 CT kids, now under the age of 18, will eventually die from their own tobacco use
- Annual health care costs in CT directly caused by smoking are \$2.03B
- Medicaid costs caused by smoking in CT are \$520.8M
- CT residents' state and federal tax burden from smoking caused government expenditures is \$853 per household
- Smoking-caused productivity losses in CT are \$1.25B annually

This is a public health issue that requires legislation that will protect the youth from ALL Tobacco products, including, but not limited to, e-cigarettes, hookah products, vaporizers and the like. As new products are introduced in the marketplace our legislation needs to be at the forefront ensuring that there are minimal risks to Connecticut residents. It is with great anticipation that this committee extend the health benefits of this bill to ALL CT citizens, including members of the military. Lastly, I would like to emphasize that the bill “grandfathers” 18-20-year-olds, so that no members currently serving would be impacted, and that the military can continue to purchase tobacco products on federal bases.

I would like to thank you in advance for supporting this important bill.

Respectively Submitted by,



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