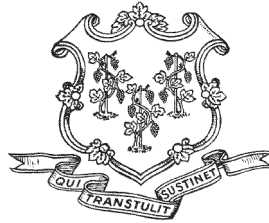


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March 20, 2018

Good morning Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, and Representative Steinberg. I would like to express my support for SB 164, AN ACT RAISING THE LEGAL AGE TO PURCHASE TOBACCO TO TWENTY-ONE. This legislation would increase the legal minimum age to purchase tobacco products in Connecticut from 18 to 21.

It is clear that tobacco use has an adverse effect on health and quality of life for smokers and other tobacco users; it is also well known that these products are addictive. The best policy for supporting good health and quality of life is to prevent people from starting the use of tobacco. Raising the legal age for the purchase of tobacco products can delay and perhaps prevent Connecticut residents from starting tobacco use. According to a National Academy of Science report, raising the minimum legal age for purchase of tobacco products will lead to substantial reductions in tobacco use which will save lives and improve the health of Americans across the lifespan¹.

As of March, 2018, five states – California, New Jersey, Oregon, Hawaii and Maine – have raised the legal age to purchase tobacco to 21; In addition nearly 300 localities, including New York City, Chicago, and Boston² have raised the age. Early evidence indicates that the law in California is effective at preventing merchants from selling tobacco products to residents who have not reached age 21³. I believe raising the legal age to purchase tobacco products to 21 would be good policy for our state. Thank you for hearing this important bill.

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK31041> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK310412/>

² https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/content/what_we_do/state_local_issues/sales_21/states_localities_MLSA_2_1.pdf

³ <http://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/early/2018/02/05/tobaccocontrol-2017-054088>
<https://tobacco21.org/category/2018-news/>