

Public Health Committee
Public Hearing – Tuesday, March 20, 2018
Senate Bill 164 AA Raising the Legal Age To Purchase Tobacco To
Twenty-One
Mike Papale - President
In A Heartbeat Foundation

I would like to thank the Public Health committee leadership and members for providing me with the opportunity to comment in support of HB/SB 164, AA Raising the Legal Age for Purchase and Use of Tobacco Products, on behalf of the American Heart Association.

I am in full support of HB/SB 164, AA Raising the Legal Age for Purchase of Use of Tobacco Products. Heart health is very close to my family and me. In 2006, at the age of 17, I went into cardiac arrest. I did not know that I had an undiagnosed condition called hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. I was lucky to survive this event and it has allowed me to understand the importance of being heart healthy.

Three of my cousins' smoke multiple packs of cigarettes per week. All three have tried to quit, but have not been successful yet. They all have something in common and that is they started smoking at a young and impressionable age. I firmly believe that if it was illegal for them to buy cigarettes at such a young age, they would in the situation they are in today.

The statistics are clear: 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 daily smokers each year. 4,900 CT adults die each year from their own smoking. We are allowing our youth to experiment with a deadly product during a very impressionable time in their lives. This needs to change.

I also believe that all tobacco products must be covered in this bill including e-cigarettes. E-cigarettes can expose users to several chemicals, including nicotine, carbonyl compounds, and volatile organic compounds, known to have adverse health effects. I would hope to extend the health benefits of this bill to ALL CT citizens, including members of the military. This bill "grandfathers" 18-20-year-olds, so that no members currently serving would be impacted, and military can continue to purchase tobacco products on federal bases.

I respectfully request your support for this important bill.

Sincerely,



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