



Pamela Mautte, CT Prevention Network

in support of

S.B. No. 164 (RAISED) AN ACT RAISING THE LEGAL AGE TO PURCHASE TOBACCO TO TWENTY-ONE.

H.B. No. 5289 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE CLEAN INDOOR AIR ACT.

H.B. No. 5293 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE SALE OF ELECTRONIC NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND VAPOR PRODUCTS.

Public Health Committee, Tuesday, March 20, 2018

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, AA Raising the Legal Age for Purchase and Use of Tobacco Products**.

The Connecticut Prevention Network, previously made up of the 13 Regional Action Councils, was one of the few entities in the state budget that provided prevention services for substance abuse and other abusive behaviors. It now encompasses the five Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations along with a number of other non-profits who are focused on prevention efforts including on gambling, substance abuse (opioids, alcohol, marijuana and other drugs), and behavioral health (suicide prevention).

We have been working on tobacco issues for the past 20 years and have seen significant results in the reduction of both youth and adult smoking rates. These reductions are a direct result of comprehensive tobacco policies and programs that have been implemented throughout the state. We must maintain these reductions and continue to develop strong tobacco control policies. Over the past several years, we have been learning more and more about the electronic cigarette, or electronic nicotine delivery device. An electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) is a battery-operated device that looks, feels, and tastes like a tobacco cigarette. They deliver nicotine, flavor, and other chemicals to the user in the form of a vapor. They are growing in popularity, dropping in price, and we have seen **significant** increases in youth using these products.

I urge you to support SB 164 and help keep CT youth tobacco free by raising the age of tobacco to 21. 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 21.¹

CT data illustrates that 10.3% of high school students smoke and 7.2% of high school students use e-cigarettes. In the 2016 Valley Survey of Student Needs (Ansonia, Derby, Oxford, Seymour, and Shelton) students in grade 11 (n= 738 students) reported:

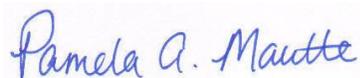
- 22.5% have used an e-cigarette
- 9.3% have smoke cigarettes

These numbers are unacceptable and it is why we must raise the age on all tobacco products. Delaying the age when kids first experiment or begin using tobacco can reduce the risk that they transition to regular or daily tobacco use and increase their chances of successfully quitting, if they do become regular users. Delaying the use of tobacco may also help reduce the duration and intensity of a person's smoking, which are strongly associated with increased risk for serious health conditions. 56,000 CT kids, now under the age of 18, will eventually die from their own tobacco use and current annual health care costs in CT directly caused by smoking are \$2.03B. Make CT kids a priority, save lives and reduce health care costs by raising the age to 21!

CPN also supports **HB 5289 and HB 5293** which begin to treat electronic cigarettes more like the health risk that we have come to learn that they are. As evidenced by the numbers, youth across the state have taken up using electronic cigarettes and the online availability has allowed for the ease of sales to minors.

We urge your support for all three important pieces of legislation.

Sincerely,



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https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/content/what_we_do/state_local_issues/sales_21/states_localities_MLSA_21.pdf