

## Tobacco 21 Testimony

My name is David Koch, but most people know me as “Coach”. I live in Hamden. I would like to provide my testimony in support of H.B. 7200- An Act Prohibiting the Sale of Cigarettes, Tobacco Products, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems and Vapor Products to Persons Under Age Twenty-one. Nearly a third of all cancer deaths are attributable to tobacco use. We can and must do more to prevent these needless deaths, because cancer has taken too much from too many of us in Connecticut. Increasing the sales age for tobacco products from 18 to 21 is a welcome start.

As a cancer survivor, I know all too well the impact cancer has on our communities. Nearly everyone knows someone who has battled the disease, or they have battled it themselves. And tobacco is the number one preventable cause of death and disease in Connecticut and nationwide. It’s time for us to change that.

Restricting sales of tobacco products to youth and young adults promises to be a critical component to a comprehensive strategy to reduce initiation and lifelong tobacco addiction.

A study by the Institute of Medicine predicted that raising the minimum age of sale of tobacco products from 18 to 21 could decrease the prevalence of smoking by 12% saving thousands of lives and millions of dollars. Please increase the minimum tobacco sales age to protect Connecticut’s youth and keep them from becoming the next generation of smokers.