

Public Health Committee
Public Hearing – March 4, 2018
HB 7200 AA Prohibiting The Sale Of Cigarettes, Tobacco Products,
Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems And Vapor Products To
Persons Under Age Twenty-One
Don Maletto, Executive Director
Connecticut Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs

I am writing this testimony in support of H.B. 7200 Prohibiting the Sale of Cigarettes, Tobacco Products, Electronic Nicotine Delivery systems and Vapor Product to Person Under the Age of Twenty-One.

The Alliance consists of fifteen Boys & Girls Clubs serving 86,000 young people in twenty-two towns and cities across thirty-two Club sites in Connecticut. Boys and Girls Clubs provide a safe haven that has programs in three core areas Healthy Lifestyles, Academic Success and Good Character and Leadership.

We know that life long smokers typically start smoking before the age of twenty-one and we also know the health cost to the individual and the financial cost to the country when someone becomes a life long smoker. Boys & Girls Clubs in Connecticut provide smoking prevention programming and on a daily basis strive for our members to have a Healthy Lifestyle. However, our laws matter and when leadership in the State of Connecticut support policies that lead to more youth smoking and creating life long smoking habits this sends a signal that works directly in opposition to this message. In support of these statements here are the statistics. National data show that about 95 percent of adult smokers begin smoking before they turn 21, and a substantial number of smokers start even younger— about 80 percent of adult smokers first try smoking before age 18.¹ Tobacco use is a pediatric epidemic because most tobacco use starts in the high school years.¹ Eighty percent (80%) of youth smokers will become adult smokers and one-half of adult smokers will die prematurely from tobacco-related diseases.¹

The Connecticut Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs respectfully requests your support for this important bill which will increase the tobacco sales age on ALL tobacco products to 21 and the flavor ban for which covers ALL flavors, including menthol, mint, and wintergreen.

¹United States Department of Health and Human Services. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2014. ICPSR36361-v1. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2016-03-22. <http://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR36361.v1>; see also Institute of Medicine, *Public Health Implications of Raising the Minimum Age of Legal Access to Tobacco Products*, Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2015, <http://iom.nationalacademies.org/Reports/2015/TobaccoMinimumAgeReport.aspx>

