

March 4, 2019

Connecticut General Assembly, Public Health Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 3000  
Hartford, CT 06106

Testimony of the American Lung Association in Connecticut supporting Raised House Bill 7200, An Act Prohibiting the Sale of Cigarettes, Tobacco Products, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems and Vapor Products to Persons Under Age Twenty-one.

Dear Distinguished Chairpersons and Members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is Jane Reardon. I am a Pulmonary Clinical Nurse Specialist and a long time volunteer for the American Lung Association. I am deeply committed to the American Lung Association's mission which is to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease. I am here today to express support of House Bill 7200, which is a comprehensive approach to preventing youth tobacco access and use.

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Connecticut. Every day I see the negative impact tobacco has on our Connecticut residents. As a nurse for many years, I have worked with people who are addicted to tobacco products, who are motivated to quit, but lack the resources to do so. Many continue to smoke, despite knowledge of its effect on their failing health. I watch as my patients struggle for breath even when at rest. They can no longer participate in work and family activities that bring them joy. Most of them desperately want to quit smoking but lack the resources to do so on their own. They are not weak or unmotivated people. These are people who became addicted to a legal product that has been peddled to them by an industry that spends billions on clever marketing each year. Quitting using tobacco can be one of the most challenging things a person does in his/her life.

Helping to prevent youth from ever starting down the path of nicotine addiction would be an incredible success. There are currently 56,000 kids alive today in Connecticut who will die prematurely due to their tobacco use. And nearly ninety-five percent of adult smokers tried their first cigarette by the age of 21. We must do more to protect youth from this horrible addiction.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue. Tobacco takes a huge toll on our state and I appreciate having the opportunity to talk about reducing the burden of tobacco use we see day in and day out. I urge you to pass House Bill 7200. Thank you.

Jane Z .Reardon  
Granby, CT

