

February 2, 2016



Dear Chair Monnes Anderson and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), thank you for continually prioritizing tobacco control policies in Oregon. ACS CAN is the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society.

ACS CAN advocates for policies to address the significant burden of tobacco in Oregon. While a sound tobacco retail licensing program is important to tobacco control, **ACS CAN opposes the preemptions set out in Section 13**. Particularly, we are concerned about the limitation placed on local governments to restrict the proximity of tobacco retailers to schools and tobacco sales in pharmacies.

Preemption Hurts Local Innovation

The stakes in tobacco control are high. An estimated 7,000 Oregonians die every year because of tobacco-related illnesses, and tobacco use costs the state some \$3 billion annually in health care costs and lost productivity. It's often local governments that foster innovation in tobacco control, and two of the most common policies that we see at the local level are restricting retailer distance from schools and banning sales in pharmacies. As an evidence-based advocacy organization, the importance of local tobacco policy work cannot be understated, as these up-and-coming policies not only serve to reduce tobacco use, but often create the seeds of evidence that help public health advocates determine how to best address tobacco in our communities.

ACS CAN Supports Raising the Minimum Age of Sale to 21

Today, ACS CAN has brought close to 40 advocates from across the state to the capitol to encourage lawmakers to support raising the age of sale for tobacco products to 21. Some 2,600 Oregon teens begin smoking every year, and it's important that we take every action possible to keep our youth away from nicotine addiction. The adolescent brain is still developing and is more susceptible to the addictive effects of nicotine, making it extremely important for us to take action.

We know that 80% of adult daily smokers begin smoking before age 18, and 95% begin before age 21. Raising the tobacco sale age to 21 has the potential to affect those age 15-17 most, though. With many teens in this age range accessing tobacco products through peers, raising the age of sale can shift the peer circle and alter the social sources of tobacco.

In summary, **ACS CAN opposes preemption within SB 1559 and supports raising the age of sale for tobacco products in Oregon to 21**. We hope that you will take the strongest actions possible to address the burden of tobacco in our state.

Sincerely,

Luis Rodriguez
Oregon Government Relations Director
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN)

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