

SUPPORT Tobacco 21 and Vaping Restrictions

THE COUNCIL SUPPORTS the Executive Budget proposals to restrict the sale of tobacco products and certain flavored liquids in E-Cigarettes

Decades of science on tobacco and cigarette usage has left no doubt about the destructive health impacts of tobacco use and the highly addictive components of nicotine. Once an individual is addicted to tobacco, it can be extremely challenging and costly to fight this addiction.

Superintendents are concerned for the well-being of students not just when students are on school grounds, but at home and even after they graduate. Raising the statewide legal age to purchase tobacco and electronic cigarettes to 21 would help keep tobacco out of schools and away from younger students. It would also help reduce addiction rates among young adults by delaying the legal purchase age for a few more years.

The use of vaping and other similar devices have skyrocketed across schools in the state. The increase in use of e-cigarettes has been notably problematic among middle school students.

School leaders have taken steps to curb their usage and have been holding meetings and community organizing efforts against their expansion. However, many companies produce flavored e-cigarette liquids that are commonly used by young people. These flavors entice students to try these devices and they are clearly targeted towards attracting the attention students in middle and high school.

The Executive Budget would authorize the Department of Health, pursuant to regulations, to ban the sale of certain flavored liquids that are used in e-cigarettes. This authority and subsequent action by the Department of Health would curb e-cigarette use among pre-teens and teenagers.

DELAY Authorizing Recreational Cannabis Use

The Executive Budget would legalize recreational cannabis use for individuals 21 and over. The proposal would also enable municipalities to ban the sale of cannabis within their borders.

School leaders have raised several concerns regarding this proposal because of it would increase the accessibility of cannabis to students. We are all aware that students presently gain access to cannabis through a variety of other means, but the extent to which this law would increase use is questionable.

To be clear, we are not at the moment opposed to legalization and we support the admirable criminal justice objectives of the Executive and many legislators to reduce excessively harsh penalties and lifelong negative consequences from cannabis related infractions. Our concerns are borne out of the desire to see this issue removed from the budget negotiations and given enough time for debate and revisions.