

## **The Tobacco to 21 Act (S. 2100/H.R. 3656)**

*Introduced by Senators Schatz, Durbin, Brown, Markey,  
Boxer, Reed, Warren, Hirono, Blumenthal, and Whitehouse;  
and Representatives DeGette and Takai*

### **Save Lives by Raising the Tobacco Minimum Age to 21**

- The Tobacco to 21 Act would raise the minimum legal tobacco age of sale to 21.
- Three-quarters of Americans favor raising the tobacco age of sale to 21 years, including seven in ten smokers.<sup>1</sup>
- The Institute of Medicine at the National Academy of Medicine has concluded<sup>2</sup> that raising the minimum legal age of sale of tobacco products nationwide would:
  - Result in 223,000 fewer premature deaths, 50,000 fewer deaths from lung cancer, and 4.2 million fewer years of life lost for those born between 2000 and 2019;
  - Reduce tobacco initiation (especially among youth 15-17 year olds); and
  - Lead to a 12 percent decrease in smoking prevalence.
- Ninety-five (95) percent of adult smokers begin smoking before they turn 21.
  - Data suggest that adolescents may have an increased biological vulnerability to the effects of nicotine and nicotine addiction.<sup>3</sup>
  - The likelihood of developing smoking-related cancers increases with duration of smoking; therefore, those users that start at younger ages and continue to smoke are at higher risk of tobacco-related disease and death.<sup>4</sup>
- The current minimum legal tobacco age is 18.
- Numerous states and localities have already acted to raise the age to 21:
  - State of Hawaii
  - State of California (needs governor's signature)
  - California (3): Healdsburg, San Francisco, Santa Clara County
  - Illinois (2): Chicago, Evanston
  - Kansas (3): Iola, Kansas City, Olathe
  - Massachusetts (101)
  - Missouri (4): Columbia, Gladstone, Independence, Kansas City
  - New Jersey (15)
  - New York (2): New York City, Suffolk County
  - Ohio (5): Bexley, Cleveland, Grandview Heights, New Albany, Upper Arlington

### **Public Health Impacts of Tobacco**

- Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, responsible for approximately 500,000 premature deaths each year.<sup>5</sup>
- Tobacco use costs the United States approximately \$170 billion in direct medical costs and \$156 billion in lost productivity every year.<sup>5</sup>

*Please contact Aimee Grace (4-6047; [aimee\\_grace@schatz.senate.gov](mailto:aimee_grace@schatz.senate.gov)) to cosponsor.*

<sup>1</sup> American Journal of Preventive Medicine: [http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(15\)00252-4/pdf](http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(15)00252-4/pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Medicine: <http://iom.nationalacademies.org/Reports/2015/TobaccoMinimumAgeReport.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> National Institutes of Health: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3543069/>

<sup>4</sup> National Institutes of Health: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44701/>

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/fast\\_facts/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/fast_facts/)

## **Endorsements**

- Academic Pediatric Association
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
- American College of Preventive Medicine
- American Congress of Obstetricians & Gynecologists
- American Heart Association
- American Lung Association
- American Pediatric Society
- American Public Health Association
- American Veterans (AMVETS)
- Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy and Leadership
- Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
- Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP)
- Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
- Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
- Breathe America
- Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
- Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawaii
- Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
- First Focus Campaign for Children
- Hawaii Medical Service Association
- National African-American Tobacco Prevention Network
- National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)
- Pediatric Policy Council
- Respiratory Health Organization in Illinois
- Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine
- Society for Pediatric Research
- Trinity Health
- Trust for America's Health
- University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine