

Federal Update: Tobacco to 21 Bills Introduced in the U.S. House and Senate September 30, 2015

Today, U.S. Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI) and Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO) introduced bills to raise the minimum age of sales for all tobacco products to 21 nationwide in the Senate and House. California Senator Barbara Boxer is a co-sponsor of the bill.

Raising the age of sale for tobacco products to 21 will reduce tobacco use among youth and young adults – nationwide, 95 percent of adult smokers begin smoking before they turned 21. Tobacco companies spend \$9.6 billion a year – more than \$1 million every hour – to market their deadly and addictive products, much of it aimed at young people.



In March 2015, an Institute of Medicine (IOM) report found that raising the purchase age of tobacco products can save lives and reduce tobacco use and dependency among youth.

Increasing the tobacco sales age to 21 also has broad public support. A recent survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 75 percent of adults – including seven in 10 smokers – support increasing the minimum age for sale of tobacco products to 21.

The federal legislation comes on the heels of Hawaii becoming the first state to raise the tobacco sales age to 21, which takes effect January 1, 2016. Here in California, we have seen efforts to raise the purchase age to 21 at the state and local level, with communities such as Healdsburg and Santa Clara County adopting such policies. At least 90 localities in eight states have also raised the minimum legal sale age for tobacco products to 21.

To view the joint statement issued by health organizations, including the American Lung Association, click [here](#).

Center for Tobacco Policy & Organizing, September 30, 2015

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