

FACT SHEET TOBACCO 21

Senate Bill 2332

Sponsored by **State Senator Julie Morrison (D-Deerfield)**

What is “Tobacco 21”?

Senate Bill 2332 raises the legal smoking age from 18 to 21, prohibiting the purchase of alternative nicotine products, electronic cigarettes and tobacco products by individuals under the age of 21.

Why is this needed?

The primary cigarette source for underage smokers is their 18 to 20-year-old peers. Increasing the legal age of sale of tobacco would virtually eliminate the ability for high school students to purchase and share products with younger children.

Overall, raising the age will result in fewer long-term smokers, reducing overall smoking rates by an estimated 12 percent.

Does raising the age to purchase tobacco actually reduce tobacco use in teenagers?

After raising the age to purchase tobacco to 21 in 2016, authorities in Chicago recorded a dramatic drop in the number of high schoolers who smoke, from 13.6 percent in 2011 to 6 percent in 2017. Raising the age was cited as a key component of the decrease.

Would Illinois be the first to enact Tobacco 21?

No. On Jan. 1, 2016, Hawaii became the first state to raise the legal smoking age for tobacco and electronic cigarettes from 18 years of age to 21 years of age. According to the American Lung Association, over 290 cities in 19 states, including New York City, have raised the legal smoking age to 21.

The City of Evanston was the first city in Illinois to adopt Tobacco 21 in October 2014. Chicago passed a Tobacco 21 ordinance in March 2016. Currently, there are 14 jurisdictions in Illinois which have adopted Tobacco 21.

Are e-cigarettes included in this plan?

Yes. Alternative nicotine products and electronic cigarettes are included in the proposal.

What are the effects of nicotine on adolescents?

The adolescent brain is particularly sensitive to the effects of nicotine. Studies indicate that smoking during adolescence increases the risk of developing psychiatric disorders and cognitive impairment later in life.

What about individuals who serve in the military?

All Department of Defense (DOD) installations will be tobacco-free by 2020. The Major Generals of Mission: Readiness support Tobacco 21 as essential to readiness due to the negative impact on recruits.