

CB57

Sayers, Margery

From: Laura Hale <Laura.Hale@heart.org>
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Subject: Written Testimony CB57-2019
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To whom it may concern,

Please find attached AHA's written testimony for tonight's hearing for the record.

Kind Regards,

Laura



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November 18, 2019

Testimony of Laura Hale
American Heart Association Director of Government Relations
Support with Amendment CB57-2019 - Tobacco products - age change and updates for consistency with State law

Dear Chair Mercer-Rigby and Members of the Howard County Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Laura Hale and I am the Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association. On behalf of the American Heart Association, I offer support with amendment to CB57-2019.

Tobacco use is the number one preventable cause of death and disease in the United Statesⁱ. Maryland youth need stronger protection from preventable diseases caused by tobacco use. Raising the minimum legal sales age of all tobacco products does just that.

Although, this bill generally complies with the state bill, it does create one issue: it puts possible fines on clerks rather than just on owners. Owners have a duty to properly train their employees and should bear the fine with this is not done properly. We ask that the phrase "and/or clerk" be removed from the legislation to comply with state law and to protect clerks.

Increasing the minimum legal sale age for all tobacco products to 21 is critical to protect Maryland youth from the dangers of tobacco use and nicotine addiction. Currently, over 13 percent of Maryland high school students use electronic cigarettesⁱⁱ.

The Institute of Medicine issued a 2015 report estimating that raising the tobacco sales age to 21 would reduce the smoking rate by up to 12% and decrease smoking related deaths by 10%ⁱⁱⁱ. If existing smoking rates continue the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that nearly 5.6 million youth (ages 0-17) will die prematurely from a smoking-related illness^{iv}. Specifically, in Maryland, it is projected that approximately 288,900 youth (ages 0-17 years of age) will begin smoking and that 92,000 will die prematurely due to a smoking related illness^v. If Maryland raises the minimum legal sales age 34,668 children would never become smokers and 9,200 children would not die prematurely due to a smoking related illness.

Hawaii, California, Oregon, New Jersey, Maine, Massachusetts, and Washington, DC have enacted laws raising the minimum legal sales age of all tobacco products 21. More than 420 cities and counties, including Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Kansas City, New York, and St. Louis, have likewise raised the minimum legal sales age to 21.

As noted in the 2016 Surgeon Generals Report, *E-cigarette use among youth and young adults: A report of the Surgeon General* youth who use nicotine are more likely to become addicted relative to adults who use nicotine. Nicotine can also harm youth brain development.^{vi}

The evidence is clear, the tobacco sales age needs to be increased to 21 years of age without delay to save more lives from a lifetime of addiction.

The American Heart Association urges a favorable report with amendment to protect our youth from the harms of tobacco.

ⁱ The Center for Disease Control. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/fast_facts/index.htm

ⁱⁱ Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco Use
<https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/maryland>

ⁱⁱⁱ Institute of Medicine, Public Health Implications of Raising the Minimum Age of Legal Access to Tobacco Products (2015), http://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/~media/Files/Report%20Files/2015/TobaccoMinAge/tobacco_minimum_age_report_brief.pdf

^{iv} U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking: 50 Years of Progress. A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014.

^v Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, Key State Specific Tobacco Related Data and Rankings,
<https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0176.pdf>.

^{vi} Office of the Surgeon General. E-cigarette use among youth and young adults: A report of the Surgeon General. US Department of Health and Human Services. 2016.
https://ecigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/2016_sgr_full_report_non-508.pdf.