

# Rep. Sargent: Raising the legal age for tobacco use - creating healthier kids & communities

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MADISON – Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison) released the following statement regarding the release of LRB-2839/1, relating to raising the legal age for nicotine and tobacco products and creating a legal age for vapor products:

“We know that the easiest way to stop smoking is to never start. In fact, only 10% of smokers start at an age of 21 or older, and less than 1% begin after age 26. By raising the legal age of selling, purchasing, and possessing, nicotine and tobacco products, and updating our statutes to include e-cigarettes and vapors, we can deeply reduce the rate of smoking in our state.

Without question, tobacco use and nicotine addiction continues to have negative implications on public health and longevity in our state. Although our society has come a long way from the days of total tobacco dependence, with new technologies and marketing techniques, harmful smoking alternatives are on the rise– especially amongst our youth. In fact, according to the FDA, between 2017 and 2018 alone the use of vapor products by high school students increased by a staggering 78%, while increasing by 48% amongst middle school aged students.

Further, we know that many people who purchase these harmful products for the distribution to minors are between the ages of 18 and 20. Increasing the legal age of sale will greatly reduce the number of students who have access to tobacco products while in high school, and in turn dramatically help reduce youth smoking.

With popular brands like JUUL using flavors, colors, and sleek branding to target young people, it is important now more than ever for our state to work towards

reducing the lifelong, and oftentimes life ending, impacts of nicotine use by impressionable youth.

I am proud to co-sponsor LRB-2839, a bipartisan bill which raises the age for nicotine, tobacco and vapor products to 21, while working to create healthier kids and healthier communities in our state.”